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## The listener in music historiography, 1776-1928

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# PhD thesis

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The listener in music historiography, 1776-1928

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## Abstract

The present thesis is a study on the listener in music historiography. More specifically, it presents an investigation – based on the analysis of a selected group of texts – of the various discursive contexts in which the listener appears during a span of approximately 150 years from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The primary sources of my study are the music histories of John Hawkins (1776), Charles Burney (1776), Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1788 & 1801) and August Wilhelm Ambros (1862), as well as three journal articles by Arnold Schering (1922 & 1928) and Heinrich Bessler (1926). There are a number of different issues that converge on the figure of the listener. Apart from the activity of listening, the listener also provides the focal point of ideas on musical effect, taste, judgment etc., all of which, in different ways, refer to the relation between listener and music. Another set of issues arises when “the listener” merges into various transpersonal categories, like an age, a people, a religion and so on. The aim of my investigation is to map how these two levels interact and form different constellations in the music historical literature. My study positions itself within the history of ideas broadly defined, and delivers an original contribution to the understanding of the role of the listener in music historiography.

Den foreliggende afhandling er et studie af lytteren i musikhistorieskrivningen. Mere præcist leverer den en undersøgelse – baseret på analyser af en udvalgt gruppe tekster – af de forskellige diskursive sammenhænge, hvori lytteren optræder i løbet af en periode på ca. 150 år fra slutningen af det 18. århundrede til begyndelsen af det 20. århundrede. Studiets primærkilder er musikhistorier skrevet af John Hawkins (1776), Charles Burney (1776), Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1788 & 1801) og August Wilhelm Ambros (1862), samt tre tidsskriftsartikler af Arnold Schering (1922 & 1928) og Heinrich Bessler (1926). Lytteren fungerer som omdrejningspunkt for en række forskellige problemfelter. I tillæg til lytning danner lytteren referencepunkt for ideer om musikalsk effekt, smag, bedømmelse osv., der alle på forskellige måder berører relationen mellem lytter og musik. En anden type af spørgsmål opstår når "lytteren" indgår i diverse overindividuelle kategorier, som f.eks. en historisk tidsalder, et folk, en religion osv. Formålet med min undersøgelse er at kortlægge, hvordan disse to niveauer interagerer og indgår i forskellige konstellationer i den musikhistoriske litteratur. Afhandlinger positionerer sig inden for idéhistorien i vid forstand, og repræsenterer et originalt bidrag til forståelsen af lytterens funktion i musikhistorieskrivningen.



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# Introduction

The present thesis is a study on the listener in music historiography. More specifically, it is concerned with the different ways in which the listener has been used by music historians during a span of approximately 150 years from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. I write “used” instead of “investigated” because listening did not in itself constitute a separate subject of study in the literature under investigation. There was no such thing as a historiography of listening in the sense of a well defined field of investigation supported by established institutions, canons, and traditions of research. Instead, whenever the music historian put the spotlight on the listener, it was in order to use him as an explanatory device or for the purpose of supporting a specific argument. In each instance, “the listener” appears within a specific discursive field that connects it to a specific set of discursive objects and value systems. It will be my purpose to trace the developments and the revolutions of the various discursive environments surrounding the listener in music historiography.

The literature that I define as the primary sources of this study consists of seven texts. Four of them are comprehensive multi-volume music histories published in the interval from 1776 to 1862 (written by John Hawkins, Charles Burney, Johann Nikolaus Forkel and August Wilhelm Ambros). The other three are journal articles on theoretical and methodological topics published within the span of merely six years during the 1920s (written by Arnold Schering and Heinrich Bessler).

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first two trace the impact of the so-called “Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns” on music histories published during a period stretching from the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first chapter focuses on how “the listener” as a discursive object emerges out of a number of different strategies applied by music historians in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in order to defend modern music against the challenge of the ancients.

The second chapter begins with establishing the main structures of the romantic discourse on ancient and modern music, which, as I will argue, serves to justify the exclusion of the ancients from German music histories of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The second part of the chapter is

devoted to August Willhelm Ambros's reintegration of the ancients into music history, which, I will contend, is accomplished by attributing them with the invention (of at least the basic structures) of listening.

The third chapter presents a study on the notion of attunement (*Stimmung*) in the context of Johann Nikolaus Forkel's defense of church music, presented in the introduction to the second volume of his *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (1801). I will argue that the notion of attunement plays an integral role in Forkel's argument for music's capability to edify and strengthen devotion through (mere) listening as opposed to participation in singing.

The final two chapters focus on the three journal articles by Arnold Schering and Heinrich Bessler, which later commentators have credited with the initiation of the historiography of listening. The fourth chapter traces the development of Arnold Schering's conception of music history – from a dualist to a circular model – during the span of two texts published in 1922 and 1928. I will contextualize his change in historical outlook with reference to contemporaneous ideas on cultural crisis and reinvigoration.

The fifth chapter is an investigation of Heinrich Bessler's "Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens" (1926). Bessler's aim is to reformulate the fundamental issues of listening so that they appear as sociological rather than psychological questions. The text heralds a receding from the ideal of listening back into other more "primitive" forms of music reception. I will trace Bessler's notion of the primitive back to a discourse on community and society current in Germany at the time.

Each of the five chapters raises and answers an autonomous research question, and they could therefore be read as separate studies delivering independent contributions to the history of musicology. There is, however, as will be elucidated below, an inner unity among the different chapters that constitutes itself through the prevalence of a set of overarching themes that will be presented and revisited in different sections of the thesis.

The main contribution of the thesis is that it delivers an investigation of a topic – the role of the listener in music historiography – not treated in the existing scholarly literature. There are undoubtedly other sources that could have been added to the study, which would have enlarged the scope of the subject. There are likewise other equally valid perspectives on the topic not dealt with in the present investigations. My thesis is more like an exploration into a new field of research rather than as a contribution to an existing academic debate.

## Background

The background for my thesis is to be found in the recent reception of the three already mentioned journal articles by Arnold Schering (1877-1941) and Heinrich Bessler (1900-1969).<sup>1</sup> The context for the modern reception of these texts is the turn towards the listener in musicology of the last couple of decades. In 1998 Rob C. Wegman asserted that “the 1990s must count as (if nothing else) the decade in which musicology rediscovered music listening – as being more than a mere postlude to the compositional process, more than just a receptive disposition orchestrated by the composer along with the musical work itself.”<sup>2</sup> The rediscovery manifested itself in several studies devoted to listening and its history,<sup>3</sup> as well as special issues devoted to the topic in two of the major journals of historical musicology.<sup>4</sup> The scholarly resettlement of the field of listening was accompanied by accusations of a former neglect directed at musicological predecessors. It seemed like, to borrow Shai Burstyn’s statement, “the listener [had] been neglected, left aside as a lesser problem”,<sup>5</sup> or as James Obelkevich expressed it in a pioneering article from 1989, “[l]isteners had no place on Guido Adler’s original agenda for musicology and they have had little attention since.”<sup>6</sup> When Wegman, in an article published in 1998 titled “‘Das Musikalische Hören’ in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Perspectives from Pre-War Germany”, drew attention to the “pioneering essays” of Schering and Bessler, it functioned as a most welcome corrective. Wegman asserted that:

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1 The articles in question are Arnold Schering’s “Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter” (1922) and “Historische und nationale Klangstile” (1928), and Heinrich Bessler’s “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens” (1926), all originally published in the *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters*.

2 Rob C. Wegman 1998, “‘Das Musikalische Hören’ in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Perspectives from Pre-War Germany”, *Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 3-4, p. 434.

3 Among the most notable examples from the decade are: Charles Burnett, Michael Fend & Penelope Gouk (eds.) 1991, *The Second Sense: Studies in Hearing and Musical Judgment from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*, The Warburg Institute University of London, London.; Page, Christopher 1993, *Discarding Images: Reflections on Music and Culture in Medieval France*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.; James H. Johnson, 1995, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History*, University of California Press, Berkeley.; Peter Gay 1995, *The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud, Volume IV: The Naked Heart*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, pp. 11-35 (The Art of Listening). The two last mentioned are notable for being written by cultural historians rather than musicologists. The following anthology should also be mentioned: Wolfgang Gratzer (ed.) 1997, *Perspektiven einer Geschichte abendländischen Musikhörens*, Laaber-Verlag, Laaber.

4 *Early Music*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1997) & Rob C. Wegman (ed.) 1998, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 3/4. (Special Issue: ‘Music as Heard’)

5 Shai Burstyn 1997, “In quest of the period ear”, *Early Music*, Vol. 25, No. 4, p. 693.

6 James Obelkevich 1989, “In Search of the Listener”, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 114, No. 1, p. 102.

it would be wrong to claim that the question of music listening in the late Middle Ages and modern period was first discovered in the 1990s. [...] [It] became a major historiographical issue for German musicologists in the 1920s. Two scholars in particular, Arnold Schering (1877-1941) and Heinrich Besseler (1900-1969), took the lead in exploring the topic.<sup>7</sup>

Wegman's unearthing of this earlier scholarly tradition made it possible to link the new field of research to a preexisting academic canon (although modest in range). For Wegman, however, these early attempts represented nothing more than a prelude to the historiography of listening proper, a failed attempt, which, as he maintained, "never developed into the sort of vigorous scholarly tradition on which one might confidently build today."<sup>8</sup> A similar disheartening conclusion was reached by Wolfgang Dömling in his critical assessment of the literature from 1975.<sup>9</sup> "Die Idee einer selbständigen 'Geschichte des musikalischen Hörens' aber darf man als ein Phantom bezeichnen."<sup>10</sup>

But what if the texts published by Schering and Besseler in the 1920s were not primarily concerned with the history of listening? What if the seeming priority of the subject of listening in history – which Wegman, Dömling, as well as other commentators<sup>11</sup> have taken more or less for granted – is merely a projection of more recent concerns back on a scholarly tradition which was motivated by a completely different set of problems?

These kinds of suspicions provide the background for my investigations. I will proceed from the assumption that Schering's and Besseler's contributions could better be understood as responses

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7 Rob C. Wegman 1998, "'Das Musikalische Hören' in the Middle Ages and Renaissance", p. 436.

8 Ibid.

9 In addition to the contributions by Schering and Besseler, Dömling's summary also included two texts from the early 1960s by the Polish scholar Zofia Lissa (1908-1980) and the German Karl Gustav Fellerer (1902-1984), which together was taken to constitute the scholarly canon on the topic.

10 Wolfgang Dömling 1975, "'Die kranken Ohren Beethovens' oder Gibt es eine Geschichte des musikalischen Hörens?", in Constantin Floros, Hans Joachim Marx & Peter Petersen (eds.), *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft, Band 1*, 1974, Verlag der Musikalienhandlung Karl Dieter Wagner, Hamburg, p. 194.

11 For instance, Bernhard Dopheide 1978, *Musikhören – Hörerziehung*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt.

to challenges present in the immediate historical context, rather than as “disinterested” investigations into the history of listening.

A further question emerges from the acknowledgement of the diverging concerns of the 1920s’ literature and those of the 1990s’ historiography of listening. Could it be that Schering’s and Bessler’s studies have more in common with earlier ventures into the field of listening? In other words, could these texts, rather than being interpreted as the stillborn attempt or humble beginning, just as well be viewed as the final culmination of an older tradition of approaching the listener?

Although I will not address these questions directly in the following, they nevertheless provide the background for my venture into the topic.

## **Methodological considerations**

My investigation positions itself within the history of ideas, broadly defined. However, I will not be concerned with the investigation of ideas, understood as trans-historical and trans-contextual units of meaning. The thesis is not about the idea of listening, but rather the various ways in which notions of musical reception have been used by music historians for different purposes within specific historical contexts. In this respect, the thesis aligns itself with the pragmatic turn in the history of ideas/intellectual history, heralded by among others Quentin Skinner, where the presumption is “that there is no history of the idea to be written. There is only a history of its various uses, and of the varying intentions with which it was used.”<sup>12</sup> I will furthermore proceed from the assumption that the music historian does not address any fixed set of problems when bringing the listener into the spotlight.

Relations between texts and their contexts could be construed in different ways, and I will be applying different strategies of contextualization throughout the thesis. First of all, a contextualization could be required for establishing meanings in the semantic sense, i.e. the denotative reference and connotative resonance of an utterance. There are utterances which do not immediately reveal to the modern reader just what is described or reported. In order to establish the semantic meaning of a historical utterance, one will need to interpret it in context of the

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12 Quentin Skinner 2002, *Visions of Politics, Volume I: Regarding Method*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 85.

contemporaneous lexicon of use. There are no words in modern English that correspond in a one to one relationship to Forkel's use of *Stimmung* or Bessler's reference to *Gemeinschaft*. Although I will translate the two terms with the English "attunement" and "community", there is always something that is lost in the translation, not just from one language to another, but also as a consequence of constant displacements in the lexicon of a language as it traverses history. A historical contextualization might therefore serve to regain levels of meaning that are lost together with the original context of the utterance.

There is furthermore a second level of meaning which transcends the mere semantics of an utterance. This is the pragmatic meaning, i.e. what the author does or would like to accomplish with the utterance. As Skinner formulates it, "[w]e need [...] to grasp not merely what people are saying but also what they are *doing in* saying it."<sup>13</sup> This level of meaning concerns motives and intentions in the widest sense of the terms. "[W]e need to understand", Skinner maintains, "why a certain proposition has been put forward if we wish to understand the proposition itself. We need to see it not simply as a proposition but as a move in an argument. So we need to grasp why it seemed worth making that precise move by way of recapturing the presuppositions and purposes that went into the making of it."<sup>14</sup> Context is here assuming the character of a battlefield. Although Skinner's methodological considerations are developed in association with his research into the history of political thought, where different interests and conflicts are an obvious part of the deal, I will argue that the perspective they open might be equally valid when applied to the histories of ideas of musicology/music historiography.

My assumption is that my musicological sources are loaded with a greater weight of interest than what is (at least immediately) apparent to the modern reader. The identification of interest requires a specific mode of reading which seeks the normative basis of seemingly descriptive ventures, the "should" hidden within the "is" or "was".

I will proceed from the presumption that each proposition, in virtue of being a move in an argument, contains within itself an implicit interlocutor, in the form of an implied question to which the proposition is intended as an answer. The challenge is thus to restore the original argument in

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

which the proposition was intended as a contribution, as well as the wider context of contention in which the argument belongs.

“Intention” is here not construed as a psychological motive or the private (possibly idiosyncratic) intention in the mind of the author. Building on John L. Austin’s theory of speech acts, Skinner introduces the idea of “illocutionary intentions” which transcends the psychological and the private by referring the question of intention to the relation between the utterance and the conventional use of language in relation to the topic. To gain access to this level of meaning “[w]e need to focus not merely on the particular text in which we are interested but on the prevailing conventions governing the treatment of the issues or themes with which the text is concerned.”<sup>15</sup>

## Listening or not

“Listening” as a conceptual category always emerges from a backdrop of non-listening. I will be just as much concerned with this non-listening as with listening. Listening is an elusive phenomenon, often defined just as much by what it is not, as by what it is, in itself. In *Hugo Riemanns Musik-Lexikon* one could read that listening (*Hören*) is “nicht nur ein passives Erleiden von Schalleindrücken sondern vielmehr – wenigstens das musikalische H[ören] – ein aktives Auffassen von Tonfolgen und Zusammenklängen [...]”.<sup>16</sup> Here activity is singled out as the defining trait in distinguishing listening from what it is not, i.e. a passive enjoyment of sound sensations. The distinction might be formulated in other terms, but the basic notion of activity, and typically also attentiveness (which arguably could be defined as a kind of activity), is frequently emphasized when defining the phenomenon. The listener acts on the music, and exerts his power over it, like a judge over the defendant. When William Wotton in 1694 introduces the listener in guise of the “skilful hearer”, it is as a keen observer looking for flaws and excellences in order to pass judgments. Wotton’s figure of the “skilful Hearer” had to face a competing discourse that proceeded from the conviction that music, not the listener, was to be given the privilege of the act through enforcing its power on a (passive) audience. I will be concerned with the identification of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 101-102.

<sup>16</sup> Alfred Einstein (ed.) 1922, *Hugo Riemanns Musik-Lexikon, Zehnte Auflage*, Max Hesses Verlag, Berlin, p. 547.



similar antitheses – separating listening from what it is not or between opposing modes of listening – throughout the thesis.

I will furthermore relate such opposing modes of music reception to a wider discursive field transcending the narrowly musical. For instance, Ambros's notion of listening, which he defines in opposition to what could be called sensual immersion, is connected to a discourse structured over a chain of binary oppositions including freedom and slavery, reason and ignorance, light and darkness, which is superadded to other oppositions not logically binary, like sun and earth, ancient Greece and the Orient, strings and winds, edification and stirring passions, and so on. The discourse is imbued with values. The first element of the opposition is consistently ranked above the second.

In addition to the identification of such discursive structures, I will seek to trace ruptures in these structures. There are two elements that make up the discourse, as here defined: first, the chain of oppositions, secondly, the hierarchy among the pairs of opposites. A chain of oppositions might thus be transported into a new discourse in which the hierarchical relations among the binary elements are inverted. The final two chapters will be especially concerned with such reversals of earlier established hierarchies of musical reception.

The transvaluation of hierarchies could be caused by the reconceptualization of an element within the chain of opposites, alternatively through the adding of new oppositions to the chain. The central point is that the new element(s) are imbued with enough force to cause a rupture in the whole discourse and enforce a transvaluation of the chain of opposites. This is what has happened when the "Orient" emerges in Schering's writings from the 1920s in a discursive guise bearing certain similarities to Ambros's image of the Orient presented more than 60 years earlier. The difference is however, that the hierarchy among the pair of opposites constituting the discourse has been inverted. A similar inversion of value-hierarchy could be seen in the relation between Forkel's discourse on artistic music and choral singing and Bessler's discourse on the classical concert and utility music.

Although much of my study will be concerned with the identification of pairs of opposites and value-hierarchies, my approach to methodology is eclectic and in each instance determined by the text(s) under investigation.

## Chapter 1

### Ancient and modern listeners in late 18<sup>th</sup> century music historiography

It has been observed by several commentators that 18<sup>th</sup> century music historiography was deeply affected by the so-called Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns (from now on “the Quarrel”).<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to follow up on this observation and investigate just how the challenge of the Quarrel was met and reacted on, and in particular, its impact on the treatment of the listener in music historiography. I will advance the thesis that the music historians of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, in order to counter the claims made on behalf of ancient music, followed a strategy staked out already during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, which involved dissociating musical perfection from the force of its effects. I will argue that a notion of listening emerges out of these attempts to defend modern music, converging on figures like “the skilful Hearer”, “the judicious hearer” and “Kenner”.

The first section of the chapter will outline the positions that manifested themselves in an English version of the Quarrel during the final decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, often referred to as The Battle of the Books. The Quarrel provides a backdrop for the handling of the ancient-modern opposition in 18<sup>th</sup> century English music historiography. In the subsequent sections, I will take a closer look at the three works from the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century which are generally regarded as the chief exponents of the new empirical approach to music history: Sir John Hawkins’s *A General history of the Science and Practice of Music* (1776), the first volume of Charles Burney’s *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (1776), and the first volume

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance, Warren Dwight Allen 1962, *Philosophies of Music History: A Study of General Histories of Music 1600-1960*, Dover Publications, New York, pp. 71-75.; William Weber 1994, “The Intellectual Origins of Musical Canon in Eighteenth-Century England”, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 47, No.3, pp. 514-515.

of Johann Nikolaus Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (1788). I will examine how the challenge of the ancients is reacted on by the various authors, and in particular, how certain characteristics of what is taken to be a modern form of listening are used to counter the claims on behalf of ancient music.

## Ancients and moderns

“Ancient” and “modern” are ambiguous designations that might refer to different phenomena dependent on the context of use. In the Quarrel the division centered on the merits of Greco-Roman antiquity (ancients) and contemporary Europe (moderns). During the Quarrel the terms “ancients” and “moderns” were also used for referring to the defenders of the two ages. In the following I will use the designations primarily with reference to the inhabitants of the respective ages, that is, Greco-Roman antiquity and the present age. The combatants will be referred to as advocates, defenders etc. of the ancients or the moderns.

In relation to music there is a further complicating issue. In 18<sup>th</sup> century England the term “ancient music” had attained two distinct denotations. On the one hand, it was used with reference to the music of the ancient peoples – that is, the cultures preceding the fall of the Roman Empire and the coming of the Christian age. On the other hand, the term ancient music was also used to denote earlier forms of “modern music”, initially music from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, but later also more recent music and occasionally even new music written in an “ancient style.”<sup>2</sup> The need to distinguish between these two meanings of the term “ancient music” led to the use of expressions like “the modern-ancients”, which is attested by at least one article published in the weekly pamphlet *The World* in 1753.<sup>3</sup> Enrico Fubini has remarked that a similar terminological

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2 William Weber has described this idea of (modern) ancient music as “extremely significant”, and that it was “the first term employed anywhere in Europe to denote an actively performed repertory of old works.” William Weber 1992, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon Ritual, and Ideology*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 23.

3 The author is referring to the Italian composer Arcangelo Corelli, whom he categorizes as amongst the “modern-ancients”, although he had been dead for only 40 years. (*The World*, no. 26, Thursday, June 28, 1753). William Weber identifies the author as Joseph Warton. He furthermore interprets Warton’s reference to “the modern-ancients” as an attempt to distinguish Corelli and his generation from the composers of the 16th and early 17th century, supposedly being the ancients proper. William Weber 1992, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 75.

confusion existed in Italy during the same period.<sup>4</sup> Although not grounded in the customary practice of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, I will use the designations “classical-ancients” and “modern-ancients” where required for distinguishing between these two senses of the term “ancient music”.

The Quarrel emerged in France in the wake of Charles Perrault’s (1628-1703) *Le siècle de Louis le Grand* (1687) in which the author advanced the claim that the ancients were never as enlightened as the current age. The debate following Perrault’s provocation was subsequently named *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*. The contagious issue was the question of the relative merits of the Greeks and Romans in the sphere of arts and science as compared to the present age. Another underlying problematic was that of the status of philosophy and science versus poetry and art. The announcement made in Plato’s *Republic* that “there is an ancient quarrel between [poetry] and philosophy”<sup>5</sup> resounds in the debates following Perrault’s provocative denigration of the ancients. The general tendency was that men of letters sided with the ancients while philosophers/scientists argued the case of the moderns. The Quarrel would soon reach out over the borders of France. It made its appearance in England in 1690 following Sir William Temple’s defense of the ancients to counter the claims made by Perrault and his followers.

In the following, the focus will be restricted to the treatment of music in the two texts that would define the English version of the Quarrel: Sir William Temple’s (1628-1699) *Of Ancient and Modern Learning* (1690) and William Wotton’s (1666-1727) *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694). The Quarrel instigated by Temple and Wotton is often referred to as The Battle of the Books – a designation coined by Jonathan Swift in a prose satire published as part of the preface to his *A Tale of a Tub* (1704). The Quarrel would lay the premises for how ancient and modern music were discussed throughout the following century.

## Sir William Temple

Sir William Temple (1628-1699) was the man who brought the Quarrel to England with his essay *Of Ancient and Modern Learning* (1690). Temple is primarily remembered today as the initiator of

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4 Enrico Fubini 1994, *Music & Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe: A Source Book*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 340.

5 Plato 1997, *Complete Works*, John M. Cooper (ed.), Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, p. 1211.

the English Quarrel. As Yu Liu remarks, “[u]nfortunately, scholarly attention to him in the literary field has so far been focused almost exclusively on how benignly misguided he was in a futile fight for the past against the present in European arts and sciences.”<sup>6</sup> However, in his day he acquired fame as a statesman and diplomat who had been instrumental in negotiating the peace treaty to end the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1668). In the context of the Quarrel he is famous for his simile comparing moderns to dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants, to illustrate the point that the moderns would do best to imitate the ancients rather than substituting ancient models for own inventions.<sup>7</sup> Temple viewed modern music as a modern invention, practiced with no regards to instructions given by the ancient theoreticians. He finds the failures of this modern invention richly attested in the descriptions of the musical effects and wonders recounted in the ancient sources, which seem to describe an art far more forceful in its effects than its modern equivalent.

What are become of the Charms of Musick, by which Men and Beasts, Fishes, Fowls, and Serpents were so frequently Enchanted, and their very Natures changed; By which the Passions of men were raised to the greatest heighth and violence, and then as suddenly appeased, so as they might be justly said to be turned into Lyons or Lambs, into Wolves or into Harts, by the Power and Charms of this admirable Art? 'Tis agreed by the Learned that the Science of Musick, so admired of the Ancients, is wholly lost in the World, and that what we have now is made up out of certain Notes that fell into the fancy or observation of a poor *Fryar* in chanting his Mattins. So as those Two Divine Excellencies of Musick and Poetry are grown in a manner to be little more, but the one Fidling, and the other Rhyming; and are indeed very worthy the ignorance of the Fryer and the barbarousness of the *Goths* that introduced them among us.<sup>8</sup>

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6 Yu Liu 2010, “Tapping into a Different Cultural Tradition: Sir William Temple’s Aesthetic Innovations” *The European Legacy*, Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 301.

7 Although the simile is often attributed to Temple, it seems to have had a history prior to his formulation of it. Joseph M. Levine has noted that the idea could be traced back to medieval times. “[The idea] that the moderns could be represented vis-à-vis the ancients as dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants, was a thought that seems to go back at least as far as the twelfth century, to the medieval humanists of the school of Chartres. Nor was it soon forgotten; it appears to have been used at least once in every generation thereafter right down until the time of the quarrel [...]” Joseph M. Levine, 1981, “Ancients and Moderns Reconsidered”, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 75.

8 Sir William Temple 1909, *Essays On Ancient & Modern Learning and On Poetry*, J. E. Spingarn (ed.), Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 26.

Temple's argument for the superiority of ancient music is based on these descriptions of musical effects and wonders. His narrative of decline is based on the observation that modern music does not appear to achieve anything of the same sort. The superiority of ancient music is thus attested by its seemingly greater force over the audience. The effects referred to by Temple are basically the same that will continue to surface in the musical discussions throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. One class of effects is those recounted in the Orphic myths, which attest to ancient music's ability to take hold of the passions and will of man and animals, and even cause movement in inanimate objects. Another type of effects are those formulated in the political writings of e.g. Plato, in which music is attributed with the ability to prepare the soul for social life by instilling it with feelings of sympathy and softening the habits. In addition to this one finds recounts of medical effects. There are also the biblical accounts, and in particular, the famous and much quoted instance where David banishes the evil spirit that had taken hold of Saul by playing his harp.

Temple's allusion to "the Fryar" – which, it has been suggested, might be a reference to Guido d' Arezzo, who at the time was widely believed to have invented modern music<sup>9</sup> – makes him venture straight into the heathen-Christian problematic. The heathen-Christian opposition will, as we shall see in the following chapter, play a decisive role in the German discussion of ancient and modern music in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, this does not seem to play such a great role, neither in The Battle of the Books, nor in late 18<sup>th</sup> century music historiography.

## **William Wotton**

Four years later the theologian, linguist and classical scholar William Wotton (1666-1727) would answer Temple with an apologia for the moderns in the essay *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694, from now on *Reflections*). Although a productive and versatile scholar in several fields of knowledge, Wotton is, like Temple, primarily remembered for his involvement in the Quarrel. In the twenty-fourth chapter of *Reflections* Wotton presents a refutation of Temple's claims on behalf of the ancient music, as well as an argument for the superiority of modern music. His argument could be summarized in three main points. First, Wotton finds the ancient sources untrustworthy, and although he does not dismiss them altogether, he cautions that one should not

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9 Herbert M. Schueller 1960, "The Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns", *Music & Letters*, Vol. 42, No. 4, p. 317.

believe everything recounted in them. He suggests, with reference to Horace, that the reports on musical effects might be thought of as allegories.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, modern music possesses a greater variety compared to ancient music, which he takes as an indication of its superiority.<sup>11</sup> This claim on greater variety is based on “the Opinion of several who are Judges of the Matter” who have found that “[t]he Ancients had not [...] so many Gradations of Half-Notes and Quarter-Notes between the Whole Ones as are now used”. This richer reservoir of musical means available to modern music must, as Wotton concludes, “of necessity introduce an unspeakable Variety into Modern *Musick*, more than could formerly be had: Because it is in Notes, as it is in Numbers; the more there are of them, the more variously they may be combined together.”<sup>12</sup> This principle of variety and complexity is in direct conflict with the prevalent neoclassical ideals of late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Herbert Schueller has suggested that Wotton here “was single-handedly creating an æsthetic principle, replacing neo-classical simplicity with complexity.”<sup>13</sup>

Finally, Wotton argues that there is no necessary connection between the perfection of a musical piece and the amount of “applause” it arouses. “Applause” must here be understood as a manifestation of the effectiveness of the music. This distinction between perfection and effect is significant as it makes arguments about the forcefulness of ancient music irrelevant for the issue of musical perfection. However, the question that needs to be addressed is how a less effective music could be regarded as more perfected, and wherein this perfection lies if not in its effect on the audience. Wotton’s answer to this question rests on a distinction between different kinds of listeners, and the claim that musical effects are relative to the skills of the listener. With reference to his earlier mentioned assertion that ancient music was of a simple character compared to modern music, he assumes that the ancient audiences were lacking the skills of the best modern listeners (*Hearers*) in dealing with complex musical material. He illustrates this with a thought experiment in which the ancient listener is transferred to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

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10 William Wotton 1694, *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, Printed by J. Leake, for Peter Buck, at the Sign of the Temple, near the Inner-Temple-Gate, in Fleet-street, London, p. 284.

11 Ibid., p. 285.

12 Ibid.

13 Herbert M. Schueller 1960, “The Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns”, p. 317.

To these Men [the ancients], many of our Modern Compositions, where several Parts are sung or played at the same Time, would seem confused, intricate, and unpleasant: Though in such Compositions, the greater this seeming Confusion, the more Pleasure does the skilful Hearer take in unravelling every several Part, and in observing how artfully those seemingly disagreeing Tones joyn, like true-cut Tallies, one within another, to make up that united Concord, which very often gives little Satisfaction to common Ears; and yet it is in such sort of Compositions, that the Excellency of Modern *Musick* chiefly consists.<sup>14</sup>

The claim for modern superiority is based on the second point mentioned above, i.e. that perfection in music involves a unity within a maximum of complexity (confusion). However, the interesting point is that the complexity of modern music requires a skillful listener in order to unravel its unity. Although Wotton is referring to “the skilful Hearer”, his descriptions of the activity leading up to the musical judgment make it reasonable to designate it as listening. Music requires a listener who is skilled in the art of “observing” with his ears in order for it to reach the level of perfection characterizing modern music. To those not versed in this mode of listening, the music will seem “confused, intricate, and unpleasant”. Ancient listeners are portrayed as unskilled, rather than possessing skills different from those of the modern listener. The ancients are thus like the “common Ears” of modern time. Unskilled listeners of all ages, the ancients as well as their modern counterparts, lack the ability to perceive “that united Concord” behind the “seeming Confusion”, and are thus unable to find satisfaction in “the Excellency of Modern *Musick*”. However, Wotton’s distinction between musical perfection and musical effect leads him to the somewhat paradoxical conclusion that:

the greater End of *Musick*, which is to please the Audience, was anciently, perhaps, better answered than now; though a Modern Master would then have been dis-satisfied, because such Consorts as the Ancient *Symphonies* properly were, in which several Instruments, and perhaps Voices, played and sung the same Part together, cannot

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14 William Wotton 1694, *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, p. 286.



discover the Extent and Perfection of the Art, which here only is to be considered, so much as the Compositions of our Modern *Opera's*.<sup>15</sup>

Wotton then asserts that “the Art of *Musick* [...] is, in it self, much a perfecter Thing, though, perhaps, not much pleasanter to an unskillful Audience, than it ever was amongst the Ancient *Greeks* and *Romans*.”<sup>16</sup> At this point Wotton’s defense of modern music begins to sound a bit hollow. He distinguishes between perfection and force of musical effect (pleasure), and lets the latter stand as “the greater End of *Musick*”. The argument seems to follow the logic that: as music gains in perfection, its power over the audience weakens.

I will suggest an interpretation of Wotton’s defense that emphasizes the role of the listener in the justification of modern music. My contention is that Wotton’s strategy involves fashioning a notion of listening over the mold of “science”. Listening appears as a byproduct of Wotton’s theory of musical judgment, as the activity of collecting the premises upon which the musical judgment is based. Modern music is not made to please the ignorant masses, but rather the “skilful Master; whose Passions are then the most thoroughly raised, when his Understanding receives the greatest Satisfaction.”<sup>17</sup> There are two kinds of musical pleasures at stake here: one is immediate, not requiring the assistance of the understanding, the other is mediated by the understanding and follows directly from the satisfaction of this faculty. In John Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), a book which is widely referred to in Wotton’s text, we learn in the first paragraph that “The Understanding, like the Eye, whilst it makes us see, and perceive all other Things, takes no notice of it self: And it requires Art and Pains to set it at a distance, and make it its own Object.”<sup>18</sup> Although Locke’s simile is used for illustrating an epistemological point, it also serves to consolidate the “linkage between lucidity and rationality”, which, as Martin Jay has remarked in relation to the epistemology of Descartes and Locke, coincided with distrust in “the competing major sense organ, the ear, which absorbed only unreliable ‘hearsay’.”<sup>19</sup> One should

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15 Ibid., p. 288.

16 Ibid, p. 289.

17 Ibid., p. 288.

18 John Locke 1975, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Peter H. Nidditch (ed.), Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 43.

19 Martin Jay 1993, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 85.

expect Wotton's "skilful Hearer" to be unaffected by such "hearsays" as his activities are consistently described in metaphors derived from the more reliable sense of vision. We saw above how he described the act of listening with the help of the visually derived concept of "observing". Wotton furthermore compares the skillful master in music to the corresponding master in the art of beholding and judging a painting. Both of them derive pleasure from the process of judging.

A great Judge in Painting does not gaze upon an exquisite Piece so much to raise his Passions, as to inform his Judgment, as to approve, or to find fault. His Eye runs over every Part, to find out every Excellency; and his Pleasure lies in the Reflex Act of his Mind, when he knows that he can judiciously tell where every Beauty lies, or where the Defects are discernable; Which an ordinary Spectator would never find out.<sup>20</sup>

The faculty of understanding, as the eye in the realm of the ideal, is the foundation on which the satisfaction in perfection emerges. Wotton holds that the pleasure of the listening judge does not lie in the perception of beauty, but rather in grasping the reasons behind beauty or alternatively the defects of the painting or piece of music. That is, pleasure occurs at the moment when the perceived perfection is brought up into the light of understanding. As we shall see later in the chapter, this kind of listening is central for the music historians' justification of modern music.

Wotton's strategy in countering Temple's claim for the superiority of ancient over modern music involves the separation of musical effect from musical perfection. While the ancients excelled in the first, the moderns have surpassed them in musical perfection. Musical judgment is given a dual status in Wotton's account. On the one hand, it serves as the psychological requirement for deriving pleasure from perfection; on the other hand, it is the method through which musical perfection is attested. In order to found musical judgment on a secure scientific basis, Wotton introduces the idea that a process of the soul, characterized by the careful observations of the different parts, precedes the judgment. The knowledge providing the premises for the judgment is viewed as established through "science", according to its most basic definition: as accumulation of knowledge gained through experience. Although Wotton does not deny that music emerges from

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20 William Wotton 1694, *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, pp. 286-287.

invention, its perfection needs to be attested through a method akin to that of science. The preliminary part of the musical judgment forms the basic outlines of an idea of listening.

My assertion is that Wotton established a new basis from which modern music could be defended against the claims of ancient superiority. The strategy is intimately bound up with the tendency to divide priorities between the ancients and moderns based on the invention-science opposition. This division of the field would become prominent during the first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As noted by Joseph M. Levine, in 1730s's England the Quarrel had subsided into something like a draw based on the compromise that "[all] those activities that seemed to work by accumulation, such as the sciences and philosophy, were won for the moderns, while all those that seemed to depend upon imitation, such as literature and the arts, were left securely in the hands of the ancients."<sup>21</sup>

## **The ancients and moderns in late 18<sup>th</sup> century music historiography**

Although the Quarrel subsided in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, it would continue to affect European consciousness at least until the end of the century. It has even been argued that it made a lasting imprint especially in the sphere of the arts, where it resounds in antithesis like "learning and creating, between the dead (or their champions) and the living, between old traditions and new ones just in the making."<sup>22</sup> The Quarrel seems to have been of particular importance for the shaping of English music historiography during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Warren Dwight Allen writes that English "[music] history is, for the early eighteenth century, merely a continued effort to compare 'Ancient' with 'Modern Musick'."<sup>23</sup> The impact of the Quarrel on music historiography was, as Allen and others have noted, not restricted to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. It would continue to affect music historiographical thinking for the rest of the century and well into the following. The issues raised in the Quarrel would become part of the inherited discourse of late 18<sup>th</sup> century music

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21 Joseph M. Levine 1991, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, p. 2.

22 Herbert M. Schueller 1960, "The Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns", p. 330.

23 Warren Dwight Allen 1962, *Philosophies of Music History: A Study of General Histories of Music 1600-1960*, Dover Publications, New York, p. 71.

historiography. This does not mean that the problems it raised and the answers it provided were simply accepted by the music historian. In the preface to the first volume of his *A General History of Music*, Charles Burney expresses weariness in regards to the whole issue. “[A]s to the superior or inferior degree of excellence in the ancient music, compared with the modern, it is now as impossible to determine, as it is *to hear both sides*.”<sup>24</sup> He nevertheless defends its inclusion, albeit seemingly without much enthusiasm, with reference to customary practice among his predecessors.

Indeed it was my intention to begin my history with the invention of the present musical scale and counterpoint; for ‘What can we reason, but from what we know?’ But it was impossible to read a great number of books upon the subject, without meeting with conjectures, and it was not easy to peruse these, without forming others of my own.<sup>25</sup>

Burney admits that he not only felt obliged to treat ancient music out of the demands of customary practice, but also that it was impossible for him to refrain from speculating and taking a stand on the issue confronting him in the literature. Like Hawkins and Forkel he inherits a discourse disseminated through the musical literature, which he is more or less condemned to use as basis for his own fashioning of music history. As we shall see, the three of them do not merely surrender to the logic of the inherited discourse. In various ways they supplement it with new elements while attempting to mold it into forms better equipped to meet their own demands.

As mentioned earlier, the Quarrel eventually settled on the compromise that the ancients excelled in invention while the moderns were superior in science. Artists could for the most part accept this compromise as it merely suggested that moderns should seek to emulate the ancient models, not that one should stop cultivating modern art. This was more difficult, if not to say impossible, in the case of music. What remained of ancient music were descriptions of it in literary sources and a few more or less undecipherable fragments of notated music. Music, as remarked by William Weber, “had no ultimate intellectual authority, no models from the past on which to build.

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24 Charles Burney 1935, *A General History of Music: From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period, Volume the First with Critical and Historical Notes by Frank Mercer*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, p. 15.

25 Ibid., p. 16.

Lacking ancient examples, it could not refer to an authority of previous works.”<sup>26</sup> Music’s detachment from the classical tradition also had consequences for the social status of practitioners of music, so that “musical amateurs could not claim as high an intellectual authority as did men of letters or connoisseurs of painting.”<sup>27</sup> The readiness to fight back against such accusations of inferiority remains one of the most prominent motives behind the emergence of the new empirical music historiography in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The challenges posed by the ancients were dealt with in different ways by the different authors. In the following I will highlight the way various historiographical and ethnological inventions were utilized for the defense of the moderns. I will also be focusing on the way John Hawkins and Johann Nikolaus Forkel were engaged in two-front battles against the ancients and the current trends in musical life. Interestingly, they employed similar types of strategies against both enemies.

## **Sir John Hawkins**

Although John Hawkins (1719-1789) in the present context has to be regarded among the defenders of the moderns, he was nevertheless a stern conservative in his musical taste. His admiration of renaissance music made him vulnerable to accusations, like those leveled against him by Burney, of loving the old and gloomy and reveling in quotes from the “Gothic authors, justly left to rot.”<sup>28</sup> Concerning his admiration for the music of the modern-ancients, Hawkins was not the lone eccentric as he has occasionally been portrayed as. The music of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century enjoyed a wide following in England throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> The popularity of “ancient music” resulted in the founding of practical and scientific institutions for its promotion, including the London based

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26 William Weber 1984, “The Contemporaneity of Eighteenth-Century Musical Taste”, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 2, p. 181

27 Ibid., p. 185.

28 Robert Stevenson 1950, “‘The Rivals’ – Hawkins, Burney, and Boswell”, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 72.

29 Thomas Day 1971, “A Renaissance Revival in Eighteenth-Century England“, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 4, pp. 575-592.

Academy of Ancient Music that Hawkins himself was active in establishing.<sup>30</sup> His highly critical views on the Italian style of music in vogue among his contemporaries was neither unheard of. Musical conservatism and skepticism towards the new – often accompanied by a notion of moral degeneration – was a common trait of the “ancient music”-movement.<sup>31</sup>

In *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (1776) Hawkins is fighting battles on two fronts. On the one front, he is fighting against the advocates of the classical-ancients, who propounded a discourse threatening to undermine the legitimacy of the modern musical tradition due to its lack of an ancient canon. On the other front, Hawkins is fighting against the contemporary musical taste, which he sees as a threat to (and a decline from) the practice of his favored music, that of the modern-ancients. His models of musical excellence are found in the period stretching from the late renaissance up until the time of Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759), whom he regards as the last composer worthy of note.

In an essay published in *The Spectator* in the spring of 1711, Joseph Addison (1672-1719) voiced the opinion that musical taste derives from habituation with musical sounds.<sup>32</sup> I will briefly recount Addison’s view as Hawkins gives it a central place in the preliminary discourse to the first volume of his history. Addison’s view is given the adversary role from which Hawkins explicates his own philosophy of music and musical taste. In the mentioned essay Addison proceeds from the opinion that musical taste follows national borders, and he advises the composer to recognize such national differences when composing for a specific audience. Addison’s assertion is based on the observation that the musical sensibilities of the Italians, the French and the English seem to diverge on several issues. This divergence is manifested both in the music itself and in the way audiences react differently to the same music. He observes, for instance, that the Italians cannot agree with the English in their admiration of the music of Henry Purcell, which he explains with the thesis that the two “nations do not always express the same passions by the same sounds.”<sup>33</sup> Addison concludes

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30 The Academy of Ancient Music (founded in 1726) would later be succeeded by Concert of Antient Music (1776-1848). In addition there were also some purely practice-oriented singing associations like Madrigal Society (founded in 1741) and Noblemen’s and Gentlemen’s Catch Club (founded in 1761), which played a major role in the dissemination of the ancient (renaissance) repertoire to the London audience. Ibid., pp. 585-590.

31 William Weber 1992, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 198-205.

32 Joseph Addison 1853, “Spectator No. 29, Tuesday, April 3, 1711“, in *The Spectator: A New Edition, Carefully Revised in Six Volumes with Prefaces Historical and Biographical by Alexander Chalmers, Vol. 1*, D. Appleton & Company, New York, pp. 218-222.

33 Ibid., p. 220.

that musical taste must be derived from habituation and that “the delicacy of hearing, and taste of harmony, has been formed upon those sounds which every country abounds with”.<sup>34</sup> The basis of musical pleasure could therefore not be found in universal principles. If that had been the case, one would expect, contrary to Addison’s observations, that everyone would react uniformly to the same music. He concludes that musical judgment cannot refer to an independent yardstick of perfection, but rather to the pleasures of the ear of the individual listener: “what is harmony to one ear, may be dissonance to another.”<sup>35</sup> There is a democratic ethos to Addison’s theory of musical taste. “Music is not designed to please only chromatic ears, but all that are capable of distinguishing harsh from disagreeable [sic] notes. A man of an ordinary ear, is a judge whether a passion is expressed in proper sounds, and whether the melody of those sounds be more or less pleasing.”<sup>36</sup> One could summarize Addison’s position with the proposition that musical taste is founded on the pleasures of the ear of the individual listener, formed through habituation with the musical environment of the land of his upbringing.<sup>37</sup> The principles used in explaining the origin of musical taste are thoroughly Lockean, just as it has been remarked that the whole of his aesthetical system is based on principles derived from John Locke’s epistemology.<sup>38</sup>

Hawkins was not impressed with Addison’s reasoning, claiming that “[w]hoever reflects on these sentiments must be inclined to question as well the goodness of the author’s ears as his knowledge of the subject.”<sup>39</sup> Hawkins does not deny that musical taste displays national and historical variations. Such variations are, however, best explained with reference to ignorance rather than habituation through experience. Neither does he deny that the ability to listen and judge

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34 Ibid., p. 220.

35 Ibid., p. 221.

36 Ibid., p. 222.

37 It should be remarked that Addison’s general theory of aesthetic taste is not as democratic as one might get the impression of judging from the mentioned essay on music. He defends the exclusivist thesis that musical taste is not a faculty universally possessed. He suggests a simple test to determine the presence or lack of the faculty of taste. “Whether ‘a Man...is possessed of this faculty or not can be discovered by empirical experiment: a reader need only read the celebrated works of antiquity or the modern period and observe his own reactions. If he finds himself ‘delighted in an extraordinary manner,’ he has taste; if he ‘finds Coldness or Indifference in his Thoughts,’ then he ‘wants the Faculty.’” Addison quoted in, Thomas Furniss 1998, “Addison, Joseph“, in Michael Kelly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, Volume 1*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 12.

38 Ibid., p. 13.

39 Sir John Hawkins 1875, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music Vol. 1*, Novello, Ewer and co., London, p. xvi.

correctly could be refined through experience. The point is rather that “the love of music” does not itself emerge from experience, as it is “implanted in us, and not the effect of refinement.”<sup>40</sup>

The principle on which his [Addison’s] reasoning is founded, is clearly that the powers of music are local; deriving their efficacy from habit, custom, and whatever else we are to understand by the genius of a people; a position as repugnant to reason and experience as that which concludes his disquisition, viz., that ‘what is harmony to one ear may be dissonance to another;’ whence as a corollary it must necessarily follow, that the same harmony or the same succession of sounds may produce different effects on different persons; and that one may be excited to mirth by an air that has drawn tears from another.<sup>41</sup>

There are two fundamental precepts in Hawkins’s philosophy of music that go against Addison’s relativism. The first is that the principles of music are “founded in geometrical truth, and seem to result from some general and universal law of nature”.<sup>42</sup> Addison’s notion of musical taste is merely quasi epistemological, deriving its structure from the empiricist psychology of judgment. Hawkins on the other hand maintains that music contains truth contents, and that musical judgment is based on the successful grasping of this content. This leads to Hawkins’s second precept: the judgment of taste is conditioned on the ability of the listener to recognize the truths inherent in the music. Like any other fact of the world, musical perfection could be more or less successfully grasped. Musical perfection is manifested in the effect the music enforces on the passions of the judicious listener being in possession of the faculty of taste. According to Hawkins, the vast majority of listeners lack the faculty of taste and thus also the ability to grasp musical perfection. To compensate they search for other pleasures in sounds, leading them to mistake such adjacent pleasures for true musical ones.

[W]ith respect to music, it must necessarily be, that the operation of its intrinsic powers can extend no farther than to those whom nature has endowed with the faculty which it

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40 Ibid., p. xxx.

41 Ibid., p. xvi.

42 Ibid., p. xiv.



is calculated to delight; and that a privation of that sense, which, superadded to the hearing, is ultimately affected by the harmony of musical sounds, must disable many, and, as some compute, not fewer than nine out of ten, from receiving that gratification in music which others experience.<sup>43</sup>

The most prominent adjacent pleasure is the pleasure in novelty.<sup>44</sup> The cultivation of this pleasure leads, Hawkins maintains, to a constant hunger for variety and to a perversion of public taste manifested in “the admiration of whatever is wild and irregular in music.”<sup>45</sup> Although Hawkins does not mention Addison in connection with his attack on novelty, he would for sure have associated the claim for novelty with the writer. Addison was well known for his introduction of the “the uncommon” as an aesthetic quality on equal footing with that of the great (sublime) and the beautiful.<sup>46</sup>

It is easy to see why Hawkins must have interpreted the principle of novelty or “the uncommon” as a threat to his defense of the modern-ancient. The principle seems better suited for justifying the “wild and irregular”, than the stable and lasting worth of musical masterpieces. The pleasure of novelty is the very antithesis of judgments made with reference to eternal standards of perfection and beauty. To fashion a musical canon “a judicious hearer is necessitated to seek for delight in those compositions, which, as owing their present existence solely to their merit, must, like the writings of the classic authors, be looked on as the standards of perfection”.<sup>47</sup> Hawkins’s “judicious hearer” is like Wotton’s “skilful Hearer” listening for perfection, and is not affected by

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43 Ibid., p. xxxii.

44 “Such hearers as these are insensible of its [music’s] charms, which yet they labour to persuade themselves are very powerful; but finding little effect from them, they seek for that gratification in novelty which novelty will not afford; and hence arises that incessant demand for variety which has induced some to imagine that music is in its very nature as mutable as fashion itself.” Ibid., p. xxxii.

45 Ibid., p. xxxvi.

46 “Every thing that is new or uncommon raises a pleasure in the imagination, because it fills the soul with an agreeable surprise, gratifies its curiosity, and gives it an idea of which it was not before possest. We are indeed so often conversant with one set of objects, and tired out with so many repeated shows of the same things, that whatever is new or uncommon contributes a little to vary human life, and to divert our minds, for a while, with the strangeness of its appearance: it serves us for a kind of refreshment, and takes off from that satiety we are apt to complain of in our usual and ordinary entertainments.” Joseph Addison 1853, “Spectator No. 412, Monday, June 23, 1712”, in *The Spectator: A New Edition, Carefully Revised in Six Volumes with Prefaces Historical and Biographical by Alexander Chalmers*, Vol. 5, D. Appleton & Company, New York, p. 35.

47 Sir John Hawkins 1875, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music Vol. 1*, p. xxxvi.

adjacent pleasures emerging from stimulations of faculties other than taste. Although Hawkins admits that “the right of private judgment is in some degree exercised by all”, he still holds that “it is the uniform testimony of men of discernment alone that stamps a character on the productions of genius, and consigns them either to oblivion or immortality.”<sup>48</sup> Hawkins’s theory of taste is founded on principles of musical elitism and conservatism.

Hawkins’s objections against the musical practice of the ancients are fashioned on the same basic principle as his critique of novelty: true musical pleasure emerges from the judgment of the faculty of taste, whereas variously false musical pleasures arise from the stimulation of other faculties. He mentions that some writers have “endeavoured to prove the inferiority of the modern music to the ancients, by a comparison of the powers of each in depriving men of the exercise of their rational faculties and by impelling them to acts of violence.”<sup>49</sup> He notes that under closer investigation these kinds of effects “will be found to have followed from some predisposition of the mind of the hearer, or peculiar coincidence of circumstances” rather than from the power of the music itself.<sup>50</sup> Modern music, when listened to in the proper manner, will reveal effects of a more beneficial kind than those enforced on the listener of ancient music.

Those who contemplate it [music] in a philosophical and rational manner, and attend to its genuine operation on the human affections, are abundantly satisfied of its efficacy, when they discover that it has a tendency to exhilarate the mind, to calm the passions, to assuage the pangs of affliction, to assist devotion, and to inspire the mind with the most noble and exalted sentiments.<sup>51</sup>

The perfection of modern music is thus attested by the beneficial effects it has on the judicious hearer, and conversely, that the often disadvantageous character of the musical effects recounted in the ancient sources indicates musical imperfection and the lack of true musical judgment among ancient listeners.

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48 Ibid., p. xxxii.

49 Ibid., p. xxiv.

50 Ibid., p. xxiv.

51 Ibid., p. xxiv.

As we saw earlier, the Quarrel had settled on the compromise of admitting superiority to the ancients in the field of invention, while the moderns were admitted the priority of excellence in the field of science (i.e. the accumulation of knowledge). A defense of the practice of modern music would thus – if one accepts the demarcation set up by the Quarrel – have to face the question of how modern invention could surpass that of the ancients in the field of music. My contention is that Hawkins’s defense of modern music rests on a reformulation of the nature of the faculty of invention. The Quarrel had settled on the issue of the superiority of ancient invention on a presumption along the lines of the saying “scarcity is the mother of invention”.<sup>52</sup> As the accumulation of knowledge progresses, the powers of the faculty of invention weaken correspondingly. However, Hawkins advances the claim for the superiority of modern music through an appeal to the principle of perpetual evolution towards perfection, which, as he asserts, is the customary path followed by all sciences.<sup>53</sup>

[A] weightier argument in favour of modern music [...] may be drawn from the natural course and order of things, which is ever towards perfection, as is seen in other sciences, physics and mathematics, for instance; so that of music it may be said, that the discoveries of one age have served but as a foundation for improvements in the next [...].<sup>54</sup>

The argument rests on the premise that music is a science, and that it, as all sciences, progresses through accumulation of knowledge. This cumulative conception of scientific progress emerged during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century through what Steven Shapin has described as an inversion of “the historical scheme that gave antiquity its intellectual authority”, succinctly expressed in Francis Bacon’s pronouncement: “[f]or rightly is truth called the daughter of time, not of authority.”<sup>55</sup> However, it should be noted that Hawkins is not just talking about the theory of music here. He is

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52 Joseph M. Levine 1991, *The Battle of the Books*, p. 203.

53 In the concluding chapter he contemptuously mentions “a set of fanciful reasoners”, probably referring to the advocates of the ancients in the Quarrel, which have asserted “that there is in the course of things a general and perpetual declination from that state of perfection in which the author of nature originally constituted the world.” Sir John Hawkins 1875, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music Vol. 2*, p. 917.

54 Sir John Hawkins 1875, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music Vol. 1*, p. xxiv.

55 Steven Shapin 1996, *The Scientific Revolution*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 80.

unmistakably advancing the thesis that modern music, as practice, also follows “the natural course and order of things” towards perfection. The claim for scientific status on behalf of musical practice goes against the conventional theories of artistic production, which held that artistic work has its origin in invention rather than science. A few paragraphs further down it becomes evident that Hawkins’s argument rests on the premise that invention itself is founded on science.

[W]hereas memory does but recall to the mind the images or remembrance of things as they were first perceived, the faculty of invention divides complex ideas into those whereof they are composed, and recommends them again after different fashions, thereby creating variety of new objects and conceptions. Now, the greater the fund of knowledge above spoken of is, the greater is the source from whence the invention of the artist or composer is supplied; and the benefits thereof are seen in new combinations and phrases, capable of variety and permutation without end. And thus much must serve at present touching the comparative merits of the ancient and modern music.<sup>56</sup>

Even though invention itself is not a science, it is fed by a source, which like science has been accumulated through experience. If one accepts the premises of Hawkins’s argument, one should assume that the products of invention have undergone the same kind of progress as the other sciences, and that music has reached a more perfected stage in modern time in comparison with the ancient age. The underlying theory of musical perfection is similar to that of Wotton: a greater reservoir of means will open up the possibility for a more elaborate unity among the parts. However, as we also saw in Wotton’s version of the argument, another thesis is advanced simultaneously: the combination of larger amounts of various elements will lead to a greater “confusion,” and will not yield much musical pleasure to those not skilled in the art of musical listening.

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56 Sir John Hawkins 1875, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music Vol. 1*, p. xxv.

## Charles Burney

John Hawkins's great rival was Charles Burney (1726-1814), who issued the first volume of his four-volume *A General History of Music*, just four months prior to the joint publication of Hawkins's five volumes. Robert Stevenson writes that Burney, in contrast to his slightly older rival, "appealed to the mind-set of the fashionable and sophisticate."<sup>57</sup> There seems to have been two factors that contributed to the more modern appeal of Burney. One factor might be his lighter and more modern prose style in contrast to that of Hawkins, whose writings have been described as heavy and prudish. Another factor might be that he was less of a conservative in matters of musical taste, something which also is apparent in his more optimistic view on music history. These differences, added to Burney's sometimes vicious attacks on his rival, have led many later commentators to exaggerate the differences of their music histories.<sup>58</sup> My presentation will, however, demonstrate that there are many similarities between them, not least in the treatment of ancient music.

In the following I will situate Burney as a transitional figure, bridging the positions of Hawkins and Forkel. It is not straight away evident that Burney represents such an intermediary position. It could just as well be argued that Hawkins and Forkel have more in common with each other than with Burney. One thing that unites Hawkins and Forkel is their conservative taste in music. Another is the similarities in aesthetic outlook. Although Forkel did not share Hawkins's pythagoreanism, both could agree that musical beauty is of an objective nature, and that music could play a vital importance in human life. Burney on the other hand expresses a more modest pretention on behalf of music, suggesting that it should merely be regarded as "an innocent luxury, unnecessary, indeed, to our existence, but a great improvement and gratification of the sense of hearing."<sup>59</sup>

That which warrants Burney the intermediary position in the present narrative is his greater emphasis on matters pertaining to the philosophy of universal history. Compared to Hawkins,

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57 Robert Stevenson 1950, "'The Rivals' – Hawkins, Burney, and Boswell", p. 75.

58 See for instance: Edward Green 2009, "The Impact of Rousseau on the Histories of Burney and Hawkins: A Study in the Ethics of Musicology", in Zdravko Blazekovic & Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie (eds.), *Music's Intellectual History*, Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale, New York, pp. 159-161.; Barry S. Brook, & Leon Plantinga 1971, "Patterns in the Historiography of 19th-Century Music", *Acta Musicologica*, Vol. 43, No. 3/4, pp. 263-264.

59 Charles Burney 1935, *A General History of Music*, p. 21.

Burney gives “the age” a more independent status. Rather than being the sum of the ignorance or wisdom of its inhabitants, the age attains status as an explanatory device in itself. History is conceived as an organism following laws of development analogous to those of the human life. Burney’s history could therefore be seen as a bridge leading from Hawkins’s transhistorical standards of explanation, towards the more elaborated historicist framework of Forkel.

It is of course true that the whole problematic of the Quarrel is based on a comparison between ages in order to determine their relative merits. However, there was a tendency to view the arts and sciences as autonomous spheres. It was in relation to these two spheres that the question of progress or decline was raised. Perfection in the one did not necessarily coincide with perfection in the other, and the merits of the ancients and the moderns were to be measured against an eternal yardstick. Burney, on the other hand, unites the different spheres under an overarching notion of the “age”. He furthermore seems to advocate a more relativistic view on musical merit. In a footnote towards the end of the first volume he suggests that musical practice should be viewed in relation to the age of its emergence.

[In] describing the Music in general of remote ages of the world, it has been my wish that the reader should mount up to each particular period of which I write, and consider the Music of antiquity as relative to the knowledge and ideas of those who heard it. Nothing is more certain than that the best Music of the time, in all ages, has greatly delighted its hearers. But notwithstanding the great differences between that one age and another, the same terms have been constantly used in describing it. However, from a *similitude* of description, we must not infer a similitude of the thing described.<sup>60</sup>

Although this relativistic/historicist ethos is not always followed up in Burney’s evaluation of the actual musical practices of the earlier ages, the purpose statement reveals an intent to view musical practice as an outcome of the conditions of the age. Neither Wotton nor Hawkins clearly discriminates between ancient listeners and the unskilled audience of modern-day. In Burney’s

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60 Ibid., p. 378 n(e).

account, ancient listeners are still unskilled, but they are so due to their inhabitation of a primitive age.

The above quote could also be interpreted as a warning against a literal interpretation of ancient sources. Burney's dictum that "from a *similitude* of description, we must not infer a similitude of the thing described", seems primarily to address the issue of source interpretation. In this context the advice to the reader to "consider the Music of antiquity as relative to the knowledge and ideas of those who heard it" seems less an expression of respect for the relative merits of ancient music than part of an argument for discarding the ancient writings as reliable sources. Even if the ancient authors have recounted their honest opinions, their writings might still be misleading because the praise and blame accorded to the music must be seen as relative to the experiences and expectations of the author. "Words are vague and fallacious; and the exclamations, *admirable! fine! exquisite!* represent nothing fixed or certain. The utmost weight we ought to give them, is to suppose that the Music or Musician, upon which they were bestowed, was the best *within the knowledge of the writer*. This kind of merit is all comparative."<sup>61</sup>

Burney's theory of the progress of ages is fashioned over the nature-civilization opposition. The position of the listener along the scale leading from nature to civilization will also determine his taste, and thus the way in which praise and blame are distributed on different kinds of music. He introduces a general law of musical taste based on the principle that "[t]he nearer the people of any country are to a state of nature, the fonder they are of noisy music, like children, who prefer a rattle and a drum to a soft and refined melody, or the artful combinations of learned harmony."<sup>62</sup> "Noisy music" is preferred because it impacts a more forceful effect on peoples living close to the state of nature than what could be achieved by "a soft and refined melody." As the people drift further from the natural state, their music should be expected to soften correspondingly.

Burney was a great admirer of the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, as Edward Green has shown in a short essay in which he traces the influence of Rousseau on Burney and (non-influence on) Hawkins.<sup>63</sup> Green finds the imprint of the Genevan philosopher in what he describes as Burney's "desire to use music to show a large and universal respect for humanity", and he

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>63</sup> Edward Green 2009, "The Impact of Rousseau on the Histories of Burney and Hawkins: A Study in the Ethics of Musicology", pp. 159-161.

contrasts “the generous, respectful and deeply insightful approach of Rousseau and Burney” to that of Hawkins, who excludes “a vast range of humanity” from the musical community.<sup>64</sup> Green’s clear cut distinction could, however, not be deemed valid in regards to the individual writer’s view on ancient music. Burney and Hawkins are both clearly on the side of the moderns as opposed to Rousseau, who in matters concerning the philosophy of politics and civility as well as music, stood firmly on the side of the ancients, whom he viewed as closer to his idealized state of nature.

In “the great corruption debate” that raged in the intellectual circles on both sides of the English channel during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, Rousseau stood out as the most stern defender of the corruption thesis (i.e. that the state of nature facilitated better conditions for morality and the cultivation of human happiness than modern civilized society, and that the latter therefore should be regarded as a corruption rather than an improvement on the former). Rousseau held the opinion that the development from the state of nature towards progressive civility is accompanied by moral decline.<sup>65</sup> Burney however, despite his admiration for Rousseau, did not share the Genevan’s high regard for the state of nature. We have already seen that he makes “noisy music” – hardly an honorary designation – a characteristic of people close to the state of nature. As Maria Semi has shown, “Burney’s history of music is dominated by a linear concept of progress”, where the “idea of decadence or corruption does not appear in the index, for the simple reason that each (musical) progress in a certain epoch is surpassed by that of the next epoch [...]”<sup>66</sup>

Rousseau’s claim of superiority on behalf of ancient music is connected to his valuing of melody above harmony. This link between melody and ancient music is provided by the association of ancient monophony<sup>67</sup> and the new homophonic orientated styles (represented by e.g. *style galante*), which emerged during the second quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century at the expense of the formerly pervasive, but now increasingly unfashionable, use of contrapuntal textures. In the musical debates over the merits of melody and harmony (as the opposition often was labeled) during the

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64 Ibid., pp. 164-165. To illustrate the difference between the two, Green cites the following passage from the preface of Hawkins’s history: “[Now] the best music of the barbarians is said to be hideous and antonishing [sic] sounds. Of what importance then can it be to enquire into a practice that has not its foundations in science or system, or to know what are the sounds that most delight a Hottentot, a wild American, or even a more refined Chinese.” Sir John Hawkins 1875, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music Vol. 1*, p. xiii.

65 Malcolm Jack 1978, “One State of Nature: Mandeville and Rousseau“, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 39, No. 1, p. 121.

66 Maria Semi 2012, *Music as a Science of Mankind in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Timothy Keates (trans.), Ashgate, Farnham, p. 144.

67 At the time it was still a debated issue if the ancients practiced polyphony.



mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, it was not uncommon to appeal to the authority of the ancients in order to give weight to the argument for the new practice. Rousseau advanced the opinion that the transition from monophony to polyphony (*Harmonie*) had ruined music – the first associated with the ancients, the second “n’est qu’une invention gothique & barbare”, and thus the musical symbol of the demise of ancient civilization.<sup>68</sup>

Burney refers to Rousseau’s opinions on harmony in a section where he discusses whether the ancients cultivated counterpoint. He agrees with Rousseau that this question must be answered in the negative. However, he is less convinced by the Genevan’s insistence on the superiority of ancient monophony over modern harmony, and he contends that “[t]his opinion is generally ranked among the paradoxes of M. Rousseau.”<sup>69</sup> It is still evident that he values Rousseau highly, referring to him as “this wonderful writer”. However, in the theory of music evolution Burney finds his historical understanding wanting, claiming that his opinions should be interpreted as proceeding “from a refined taste, enlargement of thought, and an uncommon boldness and courage in publishing notions so repugnant to established opinions [...]”<sup>70</sup>

Nevertheless, Burney shared Rousseau’s distaste for the Gothic and barbarous,<sup>71</sup> which he likewise associated with the contrapuntal style, also often referred to under the derogatory term “fugue”. As we saw earlier, Burney’s great rival Hawkins was a defender of the modern-ancients against the classical-ancients and the modern Italian/operatic style. Burney criticized Hawkins for his “love [of] the lore of Gothic ages” and his reveling in “Gothic authors, justly left to rot”, and he even claimed that Hawkins wanted to “destroy ‘whatever is graceful, elegant, or new’.”<sup>72</sup> Even though Robert Stevenson suggests that Burney’s attacks on Hawkins might have been motivated in the recognition that his rival “was the more meticulous scholar”,<sup>73</sup> there is nevertheless a real

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68 Rousseau quoted in, Carl Dahlhaus 1978, *Die Idee der absoluten Musik*, Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel, p. 53.

69 Charles Burney 1935, *A General History of Music*, p. 128.

70 Ibid., p. 129.

71 Howard Irving 1994, “Classic and Gothic: Charles Burney on ‘Ancient Music’”, *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture*, Vol. 23, pp. 243-263.

72 Robert Stevenson 1950, “‘The Rivals’ – Hawkins, Burney, and Boswell”, p. 72. The inserted Burney-quotes are from an unpublished poem called *The Trial of Midas*.

73 Ibid., p. 73. This comparative evaluation is quoted from P. H. Lang *Music in the Western Civilization* (1941). It is evident from the context that Stevenson supports Lang’s assessment of Hawkins’s contributions relative to that of Burney.

disagreement between the two concerning the merits of “modern-ancient” music (i.e. the music prior to G. F. Händel).

If one adds together his admiration for Rousseau and his distaste for “gothic” counterpoint, one might suppose that Burney would have been inclined to support the claim of the classical-ancients. However, his sympathies seem to be placed entirely on the side of the moderns, and he seems to have little patience with those whom he labels “the bigoted admirers of antiquity”.

[Men] delight in the marvelous; and many bigoted admirers of antiquity, forgetting that most of the extraordinary effects attributed to music of the ancients had their origin in poetical inventions, and mythological allegories, have given way to credulity so far as to believe, or pretend to believe, these fabulous accounts, in order to play them off against modern music; which, according to them, must remain in a state far inferior to the ancient, till it can operate all the effects that have been attributed to the music of Orpheus, Amphion, and such wonder-working bards.<sup>74</sup>

Although Burney questions the reliability of the ancient sources, he nonetheless admits that music probably exerted a stronger force on ancient listeners compared to what modern music could achieve on a modern audience. This conjecture is based on the supposition that there is an inverse proportionality between the state of development of the age and the ease by which musical effects are induced, so that “the more barbarous the age and the music, the more powerful its effects.”<sup>75</sup> He illustrates this point with a simile brought in from the field of medicine.

[In] proportion as an age, or nation, grows refined, and accustomed to musical excellence, it becomes more difficult to please. The dose of any medicine must be doubled, if frequently taken; an opiate, or cathartic, that would cause eternal sleep, or

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<sup>74</sup> Charles Burney 1935, *A General History of Music*, p. 163.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

the most violent convulsions, if administered to a patient at first in a large quantity, would become mild and anodyne by use, and a gradual encrease of the quantity.<sup>76</sup>

There is a double strategy at work in Burney's argument for the superiority of modern music. On the one hand, he deems the ancient sources untrustworthy on the ground that they are the result of "poetical invention" and "mythological allegories", and should therefore not be mistaken for reliable reports on the phenomena described. On the other hand, he still finds it reasonable to assume that ancient music exerted a stronger effect on its listener. This assertion is based on the hypothesis that the power of the musical effects is stronger the less the audience and its music have progressed on the ladder of development leading from the state of nature towards civilization. Burney therefore follows Wotton's strategy in admitting that the force of effect should be viewed as relative to the audience and therefore not a reliable indication of musical excellence.

Compared to Hawkins, Burney has less to say about the skillful or judicious musical hearer. This might be due to his greater trust in historical progress, as well as to his more progressive taste in music. The trust in progress, on the one hand, makes the superiority of modern music over the ancient the natural and expected outcome of historical development. On the other hand, Burney's comprehensive conception of progress, which includes not only artistic products but everything of the age including human souls, also warrants a greater trust in the popular taste of modern audiences. Burney's and Hawkins's contrasting views on the progress of taste have been remarked by Maria Semi.

Taste, in Burney, alters along a path of progress, a change oriented in a teleological sense, leading to the perfection of the present day [...]. In Hawkins's history, on the contrary, taste may act as a hindrance in the advance of the arts: even though technique and knowledge progress, public taste is able to mould musical production and performance to its own requirements. Nor is it certain that the taste of the majority tends towards improvement.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>77</sup> Maria Semi 2012, *Music as a Science of Mankind in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, p. 149.

However, Burney's position on these matters seems rather ambiguous and sometimes even inconsistent. There are passages in *A General History of Music* that at least seemingly contradict Semi's clear cut distinction between Burney and Hawkins on the question of the progress of taste. In the context of a warning against conflating effect with superiority, Burney turns towards the modern audience to illustrate that even in modern time it is not the most superior music which has the greatest power over the masses.

[If] it should be granted that any supernatural effects upon *man* were ever produced in former times by mere *practical music*, it would be so far from proving its *superiority* to the modern, that it seems to demonstrate the direct contrary. For, at present, it is not the most refined and uncommon melody, sung in the most exquisite manner, or the most artificial and complicated harmony, which has the greatest power over the passions of the multitude: on the contrary, the most simple music, sung to the most intelligible words, applied to a favourite and popular subject, in which the whole audience can occasionally join, will be more likely to rouse and transport them, than the most delicate or learned performance in an opera or oratorio.<sup>78</sup>

The argument is strikingly similar to that found in Wotton and Hawkins. Perfection (*superiority*) and effect do not necessarily coincide due to the limitations of the audiences, modern as well as ancient. The analogy between ancient and modern listeners resembles the strategy of Wotton and Hawkins. Although Burney is less inclined to appeal to the authority of the "skilful hearer", his distinction between superiority and effect on "the multitude" entails the existence of a certain standard of perfection discernible to a judicious listener.

## **Johann Nikolaus Forkel**

Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749-1818) was a German (Hannoverian) musician and writer on music, particularly renowned for being the first biographer of Johann Sebastian Bach, and for having

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<sup>78</sup> Charles Burney 1935, *A General History of Music*, p. 160.

written the two volumes that are often referred to as the first modern music history.<sup>79</sup> His claim to the title of inventor of modern music historiography has been defended by the assertion that he is the first to connect the phenomena of music to a philosophy of history. The philosophy of history is in this context to be understood, following Karl Löwith's definition, as "a systematic interpretation of universal history in accordance with a principle by which historical events and successions are unified and directed towards an ultimate meaning."<sup>80</sup> Forkel held various musical positions at the University of Göttingen from where he received an honorary doctorate of philosophy in 1787.

Forkel orders the different kinds of effects, attributed to music by the ancient writers, into three distinct groups: (1) the improvement and softening of the moral habits (*Sitten*) of primitive people (*rauhher Völker*); (2) the stimulation or calming of passions; and (3) the healing of various illnesses.<sup>81</sup> In contrast to Temple and the renaissance tradition, he does not give any serious consideration to the many accounts of effects enforced on animals or inanimate objects. Forkel is somewhat ambivalent in his assessment of the reliability of the ancient sources. On the one hand, he does not question the fact that ancient music could enforce the above mentioned effects on its listeners.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, he, like his English predecessors, warns that one should not believe everything the ancient sources tell. There are two main reasons for their unreliability. First, even though the text might have been written by a respected and trustworthy person, the reports on musical events might still be misleading due to an insufficient knowledge of the art. Such authors, when venturing into musical matters, do not warrant the trust of the reader.<sup>83</sup> Although the warning in this context concerns the trustworthiness of ancient sources, it is not specifically formulated against ancient authors and could therefore also be used against the opinions of modern dilettantes.

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79 Duckel's justifies Forkel's claim to this title with basis in the assertion that Forkel "more than any of his predecessors [...] felt called upon to examine the roots of his beliefs as an historian." Duckles finds this especially expressed in the introduction to the first volume, which in Forkel's own words was to be regarded as "a metaphysic of the tonal art." Vincent Duckles, 1968, "Johann Nikolaus Forkel: The Beginning of Music Historiography", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 278., see also: Wolf Franck 1949, "Musicology and its Founder, Johann Nicolaus Forkel (1749-1818)", *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 588-601.

80 Karl Löwith 1949, *Meaning in History*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 1.

81 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1788, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, Schwickertschen Verlage, Leipzig, p. 436.

82 "Daß man sich der Musik in den ältern Zeiten Griechenlands zur Hervorbringen solcher oder ähnlicher Wirkungen wirklich bedient habe, leidet keinen Zweifel." Ibid.

83 "Es kann jemand ein sehr ehrlicher, redlicher und sogar gelehrter Mann seyn, und dennoch in einzelnen Theilen der Wissenschaften, oder in den Künsten so wenig wahre Kenntniß besitzen, daß er darin durchaus keinen Glauben verdient [...]." Ibid., p. ix.

However, Forkel also warns about a second danger which specifically concerns the challenge of interpreting ancient texts.

Wer daher je die wahre Beschaffenheit der alten Musik ergründen will, darf gewiß [...] nur selten den Nachrichten so folgen, wie sie uns auch selbst von den glaubwürdigsten Geschichtschreibern des Alterthums gegeben worden sind, sonder muß die Sitten, den bürgerlichen Zustand, die Kenntnisse in andern Wissenschaften und Künsten desjenigen Volks, von dessen Musik die Rede ist, und endlich, vor allen Dingen, die Natur der Kunst selbst zu Wegweisern wählen. Nur auf diesem Wege wird er im Stande seyn, das Wahre in den Nachrichten vom Falschen zu scheiden, und nur das auf Treue und Glauben anzunehmen, was sich mit der Natur der Kunst, mit den Sitten, mit der bürgerlichen Verfassung, und mit dem Zustande anderer Kenntnisse und Künste reimen, und als möglich begreifen läßt.<sup>84</sup>

What Forkel introduces here could be described as an awareness of the ethnological challenges to text interpretation: age and culture have a determining effect on how truths are understood and recounted. Although, as we saw above, Burney prefigured this idea in the cautioning that “from a *similitude* of description, we must not infer a similitude of the thing described”, in Forkel we find it integrated into a more elaborated philosophy of history. While Burney emphasizes its negative implications for the trustworthiness of ancient sources, Forkel adds a more positive emphasis by insisting that the ancient sources contain truths as well as errors, although these truths might not be immediately accessible to the modern reader. To discern the true from the false in ancient sources, one will need to take recourse to an ethnologically informed science of interpretation.

Forkel follows a way of reasoning that had been introduced by the Italian philosopher and historian Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) in his *La Scienza Nuova* (1725). The parallel is interesting as Vico’s “new science” appeared in the aftermath of the Quarrel and addressed some of the core issues surfacing in the wake of the Quarrel. The chapter on “the true Homer” in *La Scienza Nuova* heralded the demise of “the conventional notion of Homer as a source of esoteric wisdom” reformulating his value for us moderns as “a source of insight ‘into the crude minds of the first

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., pp. viii-ix.

founders of the gentile nations’”.<sup>85</sup> This insight assumes an instrumental role in the greater purpose of restoring the old fables of “vulgar peoples” back to their truths.<sup>86</sup> “Vico’s achievement” was thus, as B. A. Haddock writes, “to realize that interpretation of documents and artifacts depended on theoretical considerations about the character of the men who produced those artifacts.”<sup>87</sup> His ethnologically informed science of interpretation is advanced as a method for extracting the truth content from old texts, through translating them into terms and conceptions current in the modern age.

Common to Forkel and Vico is that studies of the customs, civility, science and art of the ancient peoples are legitimized as means for greater insight into the ancient mind. The insights derived from such investigations are considered means towards the greater end of extracting the truth content from ancient sources. In the context of Forkel’s history, the ethnological method of interpretation is intimately bound to his defense of modern music. Much like Burney’s cautioning, it serves to show that the ancient recounts of musical effects are distorted by the ancient mind, and could therefore not serve as an argument for the superiority of ancient music.

There is no indication that Forkel was acquainted with Vico’s writings. This is neither to be expected since Vico was not widely read in Germany until the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>88</sup> Forkel might have found inspiration for his ethnological approach in the work conducted in the history department at his home university in Göttingen. At the time Forkel was writing his history, a new discipline introduced under the designation *Völkerkunde* or *Ethnographie* was developed by the so-called Göttingen School. The *Ethnographie* of the Göttingen School, with August Ludwig Schlözer (1735-1809) and his former teacher Johann Christoph Gatterer (1727-1799) as the leading figures, was instrumental in the dissemination of the ethnological perspectives to disciplines such as history and philosophical anthropology.<sup>89</sup> Possible connections between Forkel’s approach to history and that of the Göttingen School have been suggested several places in the secondary

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85 Catherine Labio 2004, *Origins and the Enlightenment: Aesthetic Epistemology from Descartes to Kant*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, p. 55.

86 B. A. Haddock 1979, “Vico’s ‘Discovery of the True Homer’: A Case-Study in Historical Reconstruction”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 40, No. 4, p. 588.

87 Ibid., p. 586.

88 Ibid., p. 584.

89 Han F. Vermeulen 2006, “The German Invention of *Völkerkunde*: Ethnological Discourse in Europe and Asia, 1740-1798”, in Sara Eigen & Mark Larrimore (eds.), *The German Invention of Race*, State University of New York Press, Albany, pp. 126-131.

literature.<sup>90</sup> However, neither Gatterer nor Schlözer are mentioned in Forkel's history. This does of course not exclude the possibility that Forkel was influenced by his slightly older university colleagues. It is in any case more than probable that he knew about their work.

Interestingly, the philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), who was among the harshest critiques of the Göttingen School (and Schlözer in particular),<sup>91</sup> is mentioned approvingly several places in Forkel's text. In the chapter on the music of the ancient Hebrews, Forkel makes a favorable reference to Herder for having come up with the best suggestion for explaining the truths behind the many ancient (in this context biblical) accounts given of the medical properties of music.

Unter so vielen Schriftstellern, die über die Wirkung der Musik überhaupt, insbesondere aber über die medicinische Kraft derselben Untersuchungen angestellt haben, hat vielleicht keiner die wahre Ursache so kurz und so faßlich erläutert als Herder [...]. Er sucht sie nicht in der ausgebildeten Kunst, sondern in der Anwendung einfacher und allgemein faßlicher Töne und Gesänge zur Erregung gewisser Lieblingsideen an welche die Menschen von Jugend auf gewöhnt sind.<sup>92</sup>

This kind of explanation is a typical feature of Forkel's music historiography. He repeatedly makes distinctions between true music (as art) and the use of certain musical elements to provoke pleasures and other effects of a non-artistic nature. We have already seen how Hawkins and Burney applied similar strategies to account for ancient music. Whereas Hawkins was inclined to explain the effects caused by ancient music as the result of ignorance or the "predisposition of the mind of the hearer, or peculiar coincidence of circumstances",<sup>93</sup> Burney proceeded from an elementary philosophy of history, where the effect of the unrefined and noisy music of peoples of nature was

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90 See, Helmuth Osthoff 1933, "Die Anfänge der Musikgeschichtsschreibung in Deutschland", *Acta Musicologica*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 100-101. ; Vincent Duckles, 1968, "Johann Nikolaus Forkel: The Beginning of Music Historiography", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 282.

91 Justin Stagl 1998, "Rationalism and Irrationalism in Early German Ethnology: The Controversy between Schlözer and Herder, 1772/73", *Anthropos*, Vol. 93, No. 4/6, pp. 521-536.

92 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1788, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. 113.

93 Sir John Hawkins 1875, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music Vol. 1*, p. xxiv.



thought to be more effective although less perfected than the refined and artificial music of the moderns.

In Forkel's historiography we find the notion of musical taste and effect integrated into a more elaborated evolutionary framework. The development of musical practices is explained by the progressive accumulation of abilities in the soul, acquired as man traverses an evolutionary scale illustrated in a three-staged model. Forkel claims that man in his primal state (*ersten Zustand*) is merely a receptive creature:

seine Seele ist noch nicht in Thätigkeit gesetzt. Sinnliche Eindrücke sind also noch die einzigen, die er annehmen kann; anderer Eindrücke, wobey sein Geist erst vergleichen, und aus der Bemerkung eines Verhältnisses oder Ebenmaaßes Vergnügen schöpfen muß, ist er noch nicht fähig. Diese sinnlichen Eindrücke müssen sogar desto heftiger und erschütternder seyn, je weniger der Geist ausgebildet, und fähig ist, sich zu beschäftigen.<sup>94</sup>

Like Burney, Forkel holds that there is an inverse proportionality between the development of the soul and the ease by which musical effects can be induced in the listener. This primal state is characterized by the soul's surrender to the environment. Man is not yet able to engage in the active introspection – the “entering into oneself” as the famous French writer on aesthetics, l'Abbé Du Bos (1670-1742), had formulated it earlier in the century<sup>95</sup> – required for tying sensations together. In the primitive state, musical pleasures are derived from single tones, not the artistic combination of tones. The experiencing of true musical pleasures demands of the listener an ability to follow the progression of tones unfolding in time.

Diejenige Wirkung, welche ein Ton, blos insofern er laut, leise, stark, schwach, rauh, sanft u. s. f. ist, hervorbringt, ist so wenig Wirkung der Musik, als Kunst betrachtet, als

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94 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1788, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. 3.

95 Jean-Baptiste Dubos [l'Abbé Du Bos] 1748, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music, With An Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Theatrical Entertainments of the Ancients*, Thomas Nugent (trans.), Printed for John Nourse, at the Lamb, opposite Katherine-Street in the Strand, London, p. 8.

das durch Anschauen einer schönen Farbe erhaltene Vergnügen, eine Wirkung der Malerey ist. Wenn daher die Musik als Kunst Wirkungen erregen soll, so erfordert sie einen Zuhörer, welcher im Stande ist, einer aneinander hängenden Reihe ihrer Ausdrücke zu folgen, sie miteinander zu verbinden, und auf diese Weise gleichsam das Bild einer Empfindung zu empfangen, welches, wenn es oft in seinem Herzen erregt wird, Spuren seines Daseyns hinterlassen, und nützliche Wirkungen hervorbringen kann.<sup>96</sup>

The single tone's power over the listener weakens as the primal state is left behind. However, and unlike Burney, Forkel is not inclined to admit that the progress from the primitive music of the natural peoples towards musical perfection involves a weakening of musical effect. Quite on the contrary, he explicitly rejects this idea by stating that it is unnatural to assume that greater perfection would lead to a weakening of effects. The learned listener (*Kenner*) will find that modern music will provide him with everything and even more of what the ancient sources ascribed to music in terms of beneficial and wondrous effects. What is lost in sensual immediacy should be regained by way of the intellect through the more active role demanded of the listener by modern music. Modern music requires a modern listener.

[W]ir können in den neuern Zeiten nicht nur ähnliche, sondern noch ungleich wichtigere Wirkungen anführen, welche nicht so wie bey den Griechen durch Nebenumstände, sondern blos allein durch Musik gewirkt worden sind. Es ist unnatürlich glauben zu wollen, daß eine Kunst durch größere Vervollkommung unkräftiger werden könne. Sie wird es nur für den, dessen Kenntnisse ihrer Vervollkommung nicht nachfolgen; für den Kenner ist sie noch so kräftig und wirksam, als sie nur je gewesen seyn mag. Sie gießt noch lindernden Balsam in die Herzen der Betrübten; sie entflammt noch den Geist der Menschen zur Andacht und zur Verehrung gegen die Gottheit; sie bessert noch unsere Sitten und lehrt uns menschlich seyn, wenn wir uns, wie Ovid sagt, ihr treu weihn; kurz, sie hat durch ihre größere Vervollkommung in den neuern Zeiten von ihren moralischen und medicinischen Wirkungen nicht nur nichts verloren, sondern vielmehr ungemein

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96 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1788, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. 437.

gewonnen, und würde selbst noch die Wunder übertreffen, welche man von der griechischen Musik erzählt, wenn unsere Gesetzgeber einen weisern Gebrauch von ihr zu machen wüßten [...].<sup>97</sup>

For the *Kenner*, musical perfection is the pathway to beneficial and forceful musical effects. Forkel does not make a qualitative distinction between the kind of effects enforced by ancient music on its audience and the ones that modern music impact on the soul and body of the *Kenner*. The distinction seems to be a quantitative – rather than a qualitative – one. The effect enforced on the audience by ancient music has been intensified while new types of effect have been superadded to the ones enjoyed by the ancients.

The ancient Greeks are situated on the second step of the ladder of musical development, indicating that they were not completely at the mercy of their sense impressions, as in the primal state, but they had neither acquired the ability to tie together tones into a coherent musical speech. Forkel emphasizes how ancient Greek music must be thought of as merely a compilation of isolated effects held together and given coherence by another art form (poetry, drama) or an activity/event (dance, work, religious ritual etc.). Forkel is not here objecting to the employment of other art forms in connection with music, or the use of music in the celebration of events. His point is rather that music should not forfeit its specific musical qualities. According to Forkel there is a decisive difference in how moderns use poetry in relation to music and the way the ancient Greeks combined those arts. While the Greeks used music to embellish poetry, the hierarchy is reversed among the moderns, where poetry serves to illustrate or underline musical expressions.<sup>98</sup> The idea is that music was born as a true art when it freed itself from the chains of poetry to set out on a path of development according to its own purely musical principles.

Forkel explains the late development of music, as compared to other arts, with reference to the high degree of culture required for the emergence of a learned listenership. While poetry and dance arise from a sublimation and refinement of everyday speech and walk, music involves a more radical departure from everyday phenomena, as there are no correspondingly obvious similarities

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 442.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 437.

between the more or less unorganized sounds of nature to the artistic fashioning of sound into music proper.

Alles ist fremd, neu, und muß erst gelernt werden, wenn es der Zuhörer verstehen soll. Der geringste Grad von wirklicher Kennerschaft ist daher in ihr weit schwerer zu erreichen, als in irgend einer andern Kunst, und es ist blos diesen Schwierigkeiten zuzuschreiben, daß sich die Urtheile der sogenannten musikalischen Kenner meistens nur über äußere Schönheit des Tons, höchst selten aber über innere Zusammensetzung und Anordnung der Gedanken erstrecken.<sup>99</sup>

For Forkel this overcoming of the unfamiliar, so as to see the inner beauty in the progressions of the musical logic, is not a battle that is forever won. If that had been the case, one would expect to see music history as a continuous evolution towards perfection. Forkel is well known for his assertion that music history peaked with Johann Sebastian Bach, from which highpoint it has since steadily declined. There must therefore be forces in music history that incline it towards decay. In a fashion similar to Hawkins, Forkel advances a critique of the “cult of novelty” to account for the historical decline.

In the third section of the introduction to the second volume, he lists the soul’s desire for change, novelty and variation, as one of four causal explanations for what he sees as the current decline in church music. The cultivation of this more easily obtainable musical pleasure is especially prevalent among the segment of the audience which he calls the ignorant and inexperienced dilettantes (*Liebhaber*).<sup>100</sup> Although he does not, like Hawkins did, suggest a statistical estimate, he does claim that this lower segment of listeners makes up the greatest part of audiences both at the present time and throughout history.

Die menschliche Seele hat eine so große Begierde nach Veränderung, Neuheit und Mannigfaltigkeit der Gegenstände, womit sie sich beschäftigt, daß selbst die höchste

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. 441-442.

<sup>100</sup> For more on Forkel’s distinction between *Kenner* and *Leibhaber*, see: Matthew Riley, 2004, *Musical Listening in the German Enlightenment: Attention, Wonder and Astonishment*, Ashgate, Aldershot, pp. 88-92.

Schönheit ihren Werth für sie verliert, so bald sie den Reiz der Neuheit oder den der Seltenheit verloren hat. [...] Dieß alles gilt indessen nur von dem kenntnißlosen Liebhaber, der keine Sache nach ihrem wahren Werthe zu schätzen und zu gebrauchen weiß. Der Weise, das heißt hier: der wahre Kenner und der wahre Künstler übersättigt sich nie an der Kunst; für ihn bleibt stets schön, was wirklich schön ist [...]. Das Wenige, was hingegen der ungeübtere Liebhaber von der Musik kennt, gehört bloß unter die äußern Schönheiten derselben, deren Reize bald stumpf werden, und Ueberdruß erwecken, wenn ihnen nicht innere Schönheiten zur Seite stehen und zur Unterstützung dienen. Diese letzere Classe der Musikliebhaber ist zu alle Zeiten die zahlreichste gewesen und ist es noch.<sup>101</sup>

Similar to Hawkins and Burney, Forkel ultimately falls down on the conclusion that the majority of listeners will never be able to catch up with the requirements placed upon them by the best music of the modern age. Most will have to settle for the pleasures of the “outer beauties” never to rise above the level of the ancients.

## Summary

In this chapter I have interpreted the three great late-18<sup>th</sup> century music histories of Hawkins, Burney and Forkel in the context of the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns. William Weber has argued that the challenge of the ancients was felt as especially severe within the musical community due to the lack of any ancient models of musical excellence and the fact that the written sources seemed to describe a music that was different from that practiced in the modern world. I have advanced the thesis that the challenge of the ancients was at least partly fought on the battlefield of the listener.

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101 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Zweyter Band*, Schwickertschen Verlage, Leipzig, pp. 19-20.

The main strategies used in countering the claims of the ancients are all prefigured in William Wotton's *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694). This includes the development towards a text critical approach to the ancient sources, which in Wotton's case manifested itself in the suggestion of an allegorical interpretation of musical wonders. Burney and Forkel applied a more ethnologically informed approach to text interpretation, where the ancient recounts were viewed in relation to the state of development of the people that heard the music.

Most significant however, is the strategy of dissociating perfection from the force of the musically induced effects. Although all three music historians follow Wotton's strategy, at least to some extent, it seems to have been difficult to admit that perfection could be separated from effect. The position was to a certain extent perceived as paradoxical. As we saw, Forkel was not willing to accept it. "Es ist unnatürlich glauben zu wollen, daß eine Kunst durch größere Vervollkommung unkräftiger werden könne."<sup>102</sup> He is nonetheless forced to make recourse to the expert listener (*Kenner*) in order to reconnect perfection and musical effect. Hawkins follows the strategy of devaluating the kinds of effects enforced by ancient music, while emphasizing the beneficial effects of modern music when contemplated in a "philosophical and rational manner".<sup>103</sup> Only Burney admits right out that ancient music was probably more forceful than its modern counterpart. He bases this conclusion on the general principle that music loses force as the audience progresses from the natural state. Common to all three music historians is the conviction that modern music has lost the immediate effects of its ancient counterpart, and that (at least the most perfected) modern music requires a certain mode of listening to elicit what is to be found of beneficial effects in it. As we have seen, none of the three authors – although Burney is a bit inconsistent on the point – seems to have placed any greater amount of trust in the common audience of the modern age. Neither does the common audience differ in any qualitatively significant way from the ancient audience. Even Forkel, who ties his theory of taste to the evolution of the soul, sees the difference between primitive peoples, the Greeks and the moderns as an accumulative one. The danger of falling back into ancient listening is ever present.

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102 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1788, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. 442.

103 Sir John Hawkins 1875, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music Vol. 1*, p. xxiv.



## Chapter 2

### Romantic historiography and Ambros

This chapter will trace a variety of the ancient-modern opposition in German musical writings from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to its (at least partial) liquidation in August Wilhelm Ambros's *Geschichte der Musik* (1862).

The first part of the chapter will focus on the ancient-modern opposition in German music histories and other musical writings during the early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. My investigation will be systematical rather than chronological. I will be more interested in establishing the essential traits as well as points of contention in the musical ancient-modern discourse, than following its chronological origin and demise. While the reception of medieval and renaissance music in the music historiography of the period has been the topic of several recent studies,<sup>1</sup> there has been little scholarly interest in the influence of the ancient-modern opposition on this literature. The reason for this oversight might lie in the fact that the ancients hardly make any appearance in the music historical literature of the period, and when they do – mainly in prefaces and introductions – it is typically for the purpose of justifying their exclusion from the subsequent historical narrative. I will seek to establish the main structures of the discourse through which the exclusion of ancient music is legitimized.

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1 Lawrence F. Bernstein 2006, “‘Singende Seele’ or ‘unsingbar’? Forkel, Ambros, and the Forces behind the Ockeghem Reception during the Late 18th and 19th Centuries”, *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 53-60.; James Garratt 2000, “Prophets Looking Backwards: German Romantic Historicism and the Representation of renaissance Music”, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 125, No. 2, pp. 164-204.; Andrew Kirkman 2000, “‘Under Such Heavy Chains’: The Discovery and Evaluation of Late Medieval Music before Ambros”, *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 102-110.; Tibor Kneif 1964, “Die Erforschung mittelalterlicher Musik in der Romantik und ihr geistesgeschichtlicher Hintergrund“, *Acta Musicologica*, Vol. 36, No. 2/3, pp. 123-136.



The second part focuses on August Wilhelm Ambros's *Geschichte der Musik* (1862), which is the first comprehensive universal history of music written in German since Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (1788 & 1801). Its volume on ancient music is explicitly presented as an attempt to overturn the image of ancient Greece drawn up by Forkel. I will advance the thesis that Ambros, despite maintaining a strict distinction between ancient and modern music, nevertheless reconnects the ancients with modern music by identifying an ancient provenance to the basic structure of modern listening.

## **The discarding of ancient music**

German music historiography of the early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century is characterized by a turn away from the grand universal scope of the 18<sup>th</sup> century pioneers, towards a more limited focus on the history of “modern” or “our current” music. The titles of the three arguably most famous German language music histories written in the interval between Forkel and Ambros illustrate this: Raphael Georg Kiesewetter's *Geschichte der europäisch-abeländischen oder unsrer heutigen Musik* (Leipzig, 1834), Gustav Schilling's *Geschichte der heutigen oder modernen Musik* (Karlsruhe, 1841), and Franz Brendel's *Geschichte der Musik in Italien, Deutschland und Frankreich* (Leipzig, 1852). The designations “current” or “modern” (in Brendel's title indicated by the limited focus on the music of “modern” (i.e. medieval or later) nations) refer to the music practiced in contemporary Europe. Designations such as “our current”, “Western” or “modern” also signal the exclusion of those musical traditions that do not lead up to (i.e. not related to) the current practice.

To justify the claim of an autonomous modern tradition, it is necessary for the music historian to convince the reader that current practice is strictly separated from other musical traditions preceding or existing contemporaneously with it. Although the above mentioned histories deal exclusively with modern music, their introductory chapters are characterized by a strong determination to rid modern music of its alleged ancient heritage. The vehemence characterizing the way the question is addressed indicates that the autonomous origin of modern music was not universally accepted, or at least not taken for granted. It furthermore signals that there is something important at stake. There is an underlying problematic requiring the separation of modern music from ancient traditions. I will argue that this requirement is closely linked to the opposition between

heathendom and Christianity, which during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century assumes an important role in the definition and justification of music.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century opposition of ancient and modern music seems to proceed from the problem of genealogy. The universal histories of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were based on the presumption that all music belonged to one great family, and each of its manifestations in space-time could be ordered on a continuous line of development stretched out from origin to perfection, from childhood to maturity. In contrast, the 19<sup>th</sup> century historiography of music is built on the premise that there are many different lineages of music, each determined by the telos implanted in each of them at their inception. It commences with the identification of the roots of the phenomenon – defined in relation to the nature of modern music (which might be more or less successfully realized in current practice) – and proceeds with tracing its various branches and their interrelatedness, as they stretch out through history. The soil in which each music is rooted determines the nature of the music that organically emerges from it like a plant.

## Raphael Georg Kiesewetter

Nowhere is the need for distinguishing ancient from modern music more clearly expressed than in the introduction to Raphael Georg Kiesewetter's (1773-1850) *Geschichte der europäisch-abendländischen oder unsrer heutigen Musik* (1834).<sup>2</sup> The purpose of Kiesewetter's history is to provide, as he formulates it, a music history that does not first lead the reader "durch das Nebelland der (todten) Musik der alten Völker."<sup>3</sup> The introduction has the character of an apologia for his omission of the ancients. The ancients referred to by Kiesewetter are primarily designated as Greeks (although he occasionally mentions them together with the Romans). Kiesewetter's strategy is precisely, as indicated in the quote above, to show that the music of the ancient peoples is dead. Not only in the obvious sense that it is not practiced anymore, but also in a more profound sense that it is beyond the prospect of resurrection, due to the lack of relationship with modern practice. Ancient

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2 The book is merely 100 pages long (excluding the appendix), and it has been described as "one of the first popular outline histories." Vincent Duckles 1970, "Patterns in the Historiography of 19th-Century Music", *Acta Musicologica*, Vol. 42, No. 1/2, p. 81.

3 Raphael Georg Kiesewetter 1834, *Geschichte der europäisch-abendländischen oder unsrer heutigen Musik: Darstellung ihres Ursprunges, ihres Wachstumes und ihrer stufenweisen Entwicklung; Von dem ersten Jahrhundert des Christenthumes bis auf unsre Zeit, Für jeden Freund der Tonkunst*, Breitkopf und Härtel, Leipzig, p. 11.

music died in its childhood before reaching the state of maturity necessary for producing offspring. It does therefore not belong to the history of “our music”, i.e. the music of the modern world. Kiesewetter presents this as a fact, which he finds insufficiently recognized, as there is a “eben so allgemein verbreitete als tief eingewurzelte Meinung, dass unsere heutige Musik aus jener der alten Griechen ausgebildet, dass sie eben nur die Fortsetzung derselben sey [...]”<sup>4</sup> He finds this opinion indefensible, claiming instead that modern music only began flourishing when it liberated itself from the rules assigned to it by the theoreticians of ancient Greece.

The purpose of Kiesewetter’s introduction is to substantiate the claim that modern music springs from a purely Christian source. It is therefore necessary to deny any classical or Jewish influence whatsoever. “Dass sich damals griechische, oder auch wohl jüdische Melodien, unter den Christengemeinden eingeschlichen hätten (wie einige Schriftsteller angenommen haben), ist durchaus nicht glaublich [...]”<sup>5</sup> He defends this assertion by pointing to the early Christians’ natural horror of everything associated with the heathens and their strong determination to disconnect from Judaism. Instead, he identifies a humble origin of modern music in “ein höchst einfacher, kunst- und regelloser Naturgesang”, which emanated from the lowly huts and secret caves of the early Christian congregations.<sup>6</sup> He does not present any empirical evidence for his claim, but merely refers to his own observations, as in the instance of Gregorian chant, which he claims exhibited a Christian-ecclesial character already in its primordial form.

[Der Gregorianische Gesang] haben in ihrer Urgestalt einen so ganz eigenen christlich-kirchlichen Charakter, und so wenig, dass man sie sich als entlehnt aus der gepriesenen altgriechischen Musik vorzustellen versucht wird, dass ich immer nicht habe begreifen können, wie sonst sehr einsichtsvolle Schriftsteller es über sich vermocht haben, zu behaupten, dass der Gregorianische Gesang, dem Kenner noch kostbare Ueberbleibsel der alten (griechischen) Melodien und ihrer verschiedenen Tonarten, darbiete.<sup>7</sup>

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4 Ibid., p. 1.

5 Ibid., p. 2.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., pp. 5-6.

In a footnote Kiesewetter makes it clear that Rousseau and Forkel are among the otherwise judicious authors who have committed the mistake of attributing a Greek heritage to Gregorian chant. However, as we shall see, they were not alone in having this opinion. Kiesewetter seems to be on the minority-side in this question. As far as I have been able to ascertain, most of his contemporaries assumed that the music of the early Christians had developed on the basis of the Greco-Roman musical legacy. However, the main assertion, that modern music is in some fundamental way Christian and thus unrelated to the music of the ancient world, seems to have been less contentious. The disagreement between Kiesewetter and his adversaries seems then to have been centered on the question of just when, in the history of music, the birth of modern music occurred. Kiesewetter does not present any strong evidence to buttress his claim that it emerged, so to say, directly from the hearts of the early Christians, without any whatsoever borrowings from the existing musical cultures of the ancient world. His denial of an ancient heritage in modern music should be interpreted as based on some philosophical requirements, rather than from an interpretation of the historical source material. My assertion is that Kiesewetter's distinction between ancient and modern music is fashioned over a chain of oppositions derived from a more fundamental theological antithesis between classical heathendom and Christianity.

## **Romanticism**

I will suggest that we look for the origin of Kiesewetter's ancient-modern opposition in the music-aesthetical discourse of romanticism. Helmuth Osthoff, who delineates the age of romantic music historiography as the age from Justus Thibaut (1772-1840) to Ambros, defines it as a new way of relating to music history. "Man sah die Musikhistorie nicht mehr mit den Augen des 18. Jahrhunderts als ein Raritätenkabinett, angefüllt mit einer Menge von toten Schätzen, sondern fing an, die Schöpfungen früherer Geschlechter als etwas Lebendiges und Fortwirkendes zu empfinden [...]."<sup>8</sup> Among the most characteristic manifestations of this desire to connect with the ancestors is the Palestrina renaissance, which the mentioned Justus Thibaut, as well as E.T.A. Hoffmann, was central in advocating.

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<sup>8</sup> Helmuth Osthoff 1933, "Die Anfänge der Musikgeschichtsschreibung in Deutschland", p. 104.

If we take Kiesewetter to be a romantic writer, which I will suggest we should, how should his dismissal of the ancients be interpreted in light of the romantics' supposed openness towards the past? Osthoff's description seems to conflict with Kiesewetter's dismissal of the ancients. The solution lies in viewing the revival of the past as highly selective. It is significant that Osthoff uses the genealogical reference to "früherer Geschlechter". The romantic revivalism is based on an awareness of genealogy. What is within the family of modern music should be cultivated. That which is not related to modern music should be discarded.

Before proceeding further, it should be noted that "romanticism" is an ambiguous designation. Arthur Lovejoy famously stated in his paper "On the discrimination of romanticisms" (1924) that "[the] word 'romantic' has come to mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing."<sup>9</sup> He enumerates three more or less independent intellectual traditions that are regularly referred to with the term. It is the second romanticism in Lovejoy's chronology that best corresponds to the ideas expressed in Kiesewetter's music history. Lovejoy traces the origin of this second form of romanticism to a group of German writers flourishing around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whose aesthetics and philosophy of art sprung from a religious basis. "'Romantic' art [...] came to mean – for one thing – an art inspired by or expressive of some idea or some ethical temper supposed to be essential in Christianity."<sup>10</sup> This "idea" or "ethical temper" of Christianity manifested itself in what Lovejoy refers to "as a habit of mind." There was a "rather general agreement among the German Romanticists: the habit of mind introduced by Christianity was distinguished by a certain insatiability; it aimed at infinite objectives and was incapable of lasting satisfaction with any goods actually reached."<sup>11</sup> This Christian "habit of mind" was formulated in opposition to the ancient. Lovejoy notes that "[it] became a favorite platitude to say that the Greeks and Romans set themselves limited ends to attain, were able to attain them, and were thus capable of self-satisfaction and finality; and that modern or 'romantic' art differed from this most fundamentally, by reason of its Christian origin, in being, as Schiller had said, a *Kunst des Unendlichen*."<sup>12</sup> Although much research on romanticism has been conducted in the years since the publication of

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9 Arthur O. Lovejoy 1924, "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 39, No. 2, p. 232.

10 Ibid., pp. 245-246.

11 Ibid., p. 246.

12 Ibid.

Lovejoy's essay, few, if any, have given a similar strong emphasis to the ancient-modern dimension in German romantic thought.

## Romantic music historiography

In response to Warren Dwight-Allen's assessment that "[no] musicological research worthy of the name was carried on from Forkel's history in 1788 to Kiesewetter's in 1834", Steven Paul Scher has suggested that one should look to the writings of "the romantics" for what he calls "literary histories of music."<sup>13</sup> He asserts that the romantic writers provide a bridge between the universal histories of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the new wave of German music historiography commencing in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The musical writings of Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder (1773-1798) and Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann (1776-1822) are mentioned as cases of such literary histories. Neither of these authors could be said to have written music histories in the conventional sense. Scher nevertheless maintains that their writings contained "types of historical consciousness" that "proved paradigmatic for theorists and historians of music throughout the nineteenth century."<sup>14</sup> In Scher's assessment of Hoffmann's "Alte und neue Kirchenmusik" (1814) the focus is on the tripartite historical model that structures his narration of the history of church music, from the golden age of Palestrina to the fall of church music in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the hope of a future regeneration. His analysis of Hoffmann's text only focuses on what in the present context counts as modern music. I will however argue that Hoffmann's "Alte und neue Kirchenmusik" is romantic also in Lovejoy's sense of being structured on an overarching ancient-modern opposition, with traits that could be said to prefigure Kiesewetter's history published twenty years later. Hoffmann starts out by defining music as a specifically Christian art, which for that very reason could never develop in the ancient world.

Ihrem innern, eigenthümlichen Wesen nach, ist daher die Musik, wie eben erst gesagt wurde, religiöser Cultus und ihr Ursprung einzig und allein in der Religion, in der

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13 Steven Paul Scher 1976, "Temporality and Mediation: W. H. Wackenroder and E. T. A. Hoffmann as Literary Historicists of Music", *The Journal of English and German Philology*, Vol. 75, No. 4, pp. 494-495.; Allen quote from: Warren Dwight Allen 1962, *Philosophies of Music History: A Study of General Histories of Music 1600-1960*, p. 85.

14 Steven Paul Scher 1976, "Temporality and Mediation", p. 496.

Kirche, zu suchen und zu finden. [...] Eben dieses ihres eigenthümlichen Wesens halber konnte die Musik nicht das Eigenthum der antiken Welt, wo alles auf sinnliche Verleiblichung ausging seyn, sondern musste dem modernen Zeitalter angehören. Die beyden einander entgegengesetzten Pole des Antiken und des Modernen, oder des Heidenthums und des Christenthums, sind in der Kunst die Plastik und die Musik.<sup>15</sup>

Hoffmann goes on by applying the botanical metaphor in which the ancient mind is likened to a barren soil in which the seeds of music could not grow and flourish. Neither could its sister art, painting.<sup>16</sup> The arts known as music and painting in the ancient world should not, according to Hoffmann, be regarded as the same as those known under the equivalent designations in the modern age. One should also note how Hoffmann links classical heathendom with sculpture and modern Christianity with music. There seems to be something inherent in Christianity, but lacking in heathendom, upon which the modern art of music is conditioned. Hoffmann thus provides an answer to the question posed by music historians since the time of the Quarrel: why is it that the ancients, who excelled in the other arts, never managed to produce music of an equally exemplar stature? While the music historians of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century appealed to evolutionary explanation – or pointed to the fact that musical sounds have a more complex relation to everyday phenomena compared to the other arts, and thus in need of the labor of generations in order to be established on a firm ground (Forkel) – Hoffmann narrows the answer down to the single factor of religion.

Roughly two decades after the release of Kiesewetter's history, Franz Brendel (1811-1868)<sup>17</sup> published what was to become one of the most widely read and cited music histories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Geschichte der Musik in Italien, Deutschland und Frankreich* (1852), printed in numerous editions up until 1906. In the introduction chapter Brendel follows Kiesewetter in distinguishing

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15 Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann 1814, "Alte und neue Kirchenmusik", *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, Vol. 16, No. 35, pp. 579-580.

16 Ibid., p. 580.

17 Apart from his music history, Brendel is famous for his writings on contemporary music, especially in relation to the music of the so-called "New German School" of Liszt and Wagner, a term coined by Brendel. Thomas S. Grey has noted that Brendel "did more than perhaps any other single figure to set the tone of critical debate on musical-cultural issues across the centre of the 19th century." He nevertheless finds Brendel's writings suffering "from a lack of concrete musical detail or any extended engagement with specific work," and furthermore that "he often demonstrates an exasperating facility from abstract speculation and a penchant from empty phrase-spinning [...]." Thomas S. Grey 2001, "Brendel, (Karl) Franz", in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Macmillan Publishers, London, p. 316.

ancient from modern music. He also follows Hoffmann's lead in defining sculpture and music as inherently ancient and modern arts respectively. He furthermore links the two art forms to basic differences in orientation of the ancient and modern mind, corresponding to their respective basis in heathendom and Christianity. While the Greek mind/spirit is directed outwards, the Christian is oriented towards the inner world of the soul. This inward orientation gained through Christianity is used by Brendel as an explanatory device to account for the Christian success and heathen failure in the art of music.

Die Tonkunst ist die Kunst des Gemüths, sie spricht als solche die innersten Tiefen der Seele aus; die innere Welt ist aber erst durch das Christenthum erschlossen worden. Bei den Griechen war der Sinn nach Aussen gewendet, das Plastische vorherrschend. Auch die gesammte äussere Beschaffenheit ihrer Musik war eine durchaus verschiedene, Melodie und Harmonie in unserem Sinne den Griechen gänzlich unbekannt. Das Christenthum und die Folgen desselben vernichteten daher mit Recht die griechischen Tonweisen und die griechischen Theorie, obschon erst nach langen, mühseligen Kämpfen, nach vielfältigen, oft wiederholten Versuchen und erst nachdem ein Jahrtausend hindurch die griechische Musik das Aufkeimen der christlichen oftmals erschwert und gehemmt hatte.<sup>18</sup>

The Greek excellence in sculpture could be explained by the idea that it was the artistic medium best suited for expressing the Greek spiritual orientation. The same outward orientation of the Greek mind is used to account for their alleged failure in music. In Gustav Schilling's (1805-1880) *Versuch einer Philosophie des Schönen in der Musik, oder Aesthetik der Tonkunst* (1838) we again meet the opposition between the plastic/sculptural and the musical attached to the two religions. The ways in which the two artistic media gives sensual form to ideas correspond, according to Schilling, to central divergences in religious notions separating Christianity from classical heathendom

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18 Franz Brendel 1860, *Geschichte der Musik in Italien, Deutschland und Frankreich, von den ersten christlichen Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart, Dritte, zum Theil umgearbeitete und vermehrte Auflage*, Verlag von Heinrich Matthes (E. O. Schurmann), Leipzig, p. 8.



Die Musik ist diejenige Kunst, worin sich der christliche Cultus zuerst entfaltete, die aber auch am meisten geeignet war, die christliche und göttliche Idee zu versinnlichen. Im Alterthume geschah diese Versinnlichung durch die Plastik, indem die Gottheiten in vollendeter menschlicher Gestalt menschliche Zustände annahmen; in christlicher Zeit konnte es aber nur durch eine Kunst geschehen, welche das Unendliche zur Aufgabe hat, und deren Elemente keine anderen als wechselnde, verschwebende, himmelgleiche sind.<sup>19</sup>

Schilling's account is again in line with the romantic ancient-modern discourse, according to the definition given by Lovejoy. Music represents the eternal, immaterial, transcendent nature of Christianity, while the plastic arts with their tangible presence, clear outlines, and determinate shapes correspond to the religious world of classical heathendom.

### **...a possible relapse back into ancient music?**

One should also note how Brendel, in the earlier quote, assumes that Greek elements lived on in music for a thousand years after the introduction of Christianity. The relatively late bloom of music, which, similarly to the ancient failure in music mentioned above, had provided music historians with a serious explanatory problem since the previous century, could now be referred to an ancient heritage that had to be overcome in order for music to develop according to its true determination. The ancients' ignorance of the true principle of music resulted in a music based on principles antithetical to the true determination of the art. The ancient heritage was thus more inhibiting to the development of music than to the other arts – with the possible exception of painting.

The relatively late birth of modern music raises the question if ancient music is really dead, or whether it still subsists in the dark corners and subterranean regions of musical life, and if so, if it could possibly return to the surface of musical life. As we have seen, the 18<sup>th</sup> century historians had no problem in comparing the ancients to modern dilettantes among the audience, nor did they make any qualitative distinction between ancient music and simple and popular genres of their own age.

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19 Gustav Schilling 1838, *Versuch einer Philosophie des Schönen in der Musik, oder Aesthetik der Tonkunst*, Grossh. Hess. Hofmusikhandlung von B. Schott's Söhnen, Mainz, p. 273.

In the romantic version of the ancient-modern distinction, with its explicit religious foundation, there is however much more at stake. There is a sense in which the return of ancient music will signal a relapse back into heathendom.

Hoffmann's short text on Beethoven's instrumental music – published as part of a compilation titled *Kreisleriana* and famous for its comparative assessment of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven – begins with elucidating the determination of music as an art. Music, as Hoffmann explains, is the only genuinely romantic art, due to the fact that it has infinity as its sole subject matter. He then turns to condemn the composers who, without any regards to the true romantic nature of music, use music for the purpose of expressing plastic contents.

Habt ihr dieß eigenthümliche Wesen auch wohl nur geahnt, ihr armen Instrumentalkomponisten, die ihr euch mühsam abquältet, bestimmte Empfindungen, ja sogar Begebenheiten darzustellen? – Wie konnte es euch denn nur einfallen, die der Plastik geradezu entgegengesetzte Kunst plastisch zu behandeln? Eure Sonnenaufgänge, eure Gewitter, eure *Batailles de trois Empereurs* u. s. w. waren wohl gewiß gar lächerliche Verirrungen und sind wohlverdienter Weise mit gänzlichem Vergessen bestraft.<sup>20</sup>

Although Hoffmann does not explicitly evoke the ancient-modern opposition, it definitely seems to loom in the background. According to the now established romantic discourse, the plastic principle seeks the determinate, whereas the musical seeks to express the eternal, that which transcends the limits of determinable thought. The first, if not heathen in its very nature, was cultivated to perfection in the ancient world; the second is exclusive to Christianity, as it was the Christian religion that first opened up the inner world of the soul expressed in music. Hoffmann would hardly have needed to mention the ancients to communicate the religious dimension of his argument. The passage from Hoffmann tells us that the danger of falling into sculpturalism could be used as a cautioning against those composers not following the path designated for music.

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20 Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann 1841, *Hoffmann's sämtliche Werke in einem Bande*, Baudry's europäische Buchhandlung, Paris, p. 578.

## The romantic peoples

In the chapter on “the romantic” in *Versuch einer Philosophie des Schönen in der Musik, oder Aesthetik der Tonkunst*, Gustav Schilling asserts that the expression “romantic” is derived from the Latin peoples (in German “romantischen Völker”). These are the people who superseded the Greeks and Romans in the Western Mediterranean region. The romantics were united as a people through the Christian religion, which manifested itself in the development of “ein höheres Gefühlsleben”.<sup>21</sup>

An issue of contention among the romantic music historians was the question if the romantic people invented modern music, or if they merely established the “habit of mind”, which would provide the precondition for a later invention. As we have seen, Kiesewetter is a stern supporter of the first position. He holds that modern music appeared more or less instantaneously with the establishment of the Christian church in late antiquity. The musicological consequence is that early monophonic chants should be regarded within the canon of modern music. Brendel on the other hand is a defender of the opposing thesis. He holds that the habit of mind, originating among the romantic people, had to wait a thousand years for the emergence of the musical means for expressing its spiritual essence in tones.

Hoffmann stands on Brendel’s side in this question. In his earlier mentioned essay on “Alte und neue Kirchenmusik”, he admitted that St. Ambrose and St. Gregory – the two founders of Christian music according to the established tradition – might have used ancient melodies as basis for their own Christian hymns. He is in total agreement with both Brendel and Kiesewetter in the assertion that modern music represents an autonomous tradition distinct from that of the ancients. However, the specific requirement he places on true Christian music, i.e. that it should utilize “chords” and “harmony”,<sup>22</sup> excludes plainchant altogether. Instead he holds that true Christian music had its origin in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Roman school of composers led by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525/26-1594), who he credits with the title “Altvaters der Musik”.<sup>23</sup> This does not mean that Hoffmann, or Brendel for that sake, denies that music evolved during the first thousand years of Christianity; it is just that it was still ancient (or at least not yet purely modern) music.

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21 Gustav Schilling 1838, *Versuch einer Philosophie des Schönen in der Musik, oder Aesthetik der Tonkunst*, p. 272.

22 Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann 1814, “Alte und neue Kirchenmusik“, p. 582.

23 Ibid.

## **Preliminary summary: the outline of the ancient-modern discourse in romanticism**

My investigation has revealed both a fundamental structure as well as some disparities in the ancient-modern discourse as manifested in a select group of German music historical and aesthetical writings of the early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. I will briefly summarize the main findings.

1) The opposition between ancient and modern is predominantly understood in religious terms. Ancient music is aligned with the heathen religion of the ancient peoples, modern music with the Christian religion. 2) Religion is assumed to determine the spiritual (including perceptual) orientation of its subjects; at least this is a general assumption in regards to the Christian religion. Classical heathendom is characterized by an outward orientation of the mind, manifested in the tendency to portray gods in human forms in plastic media. Christianity, on the other hand, is characterized by an inward orientation and is understood as a religion of perpetual transcendence reaching out towards the illimitable and eternal. 3) Ancient music is regarded as music only in name and medium, as it lacks the expressive content defining modern music. Ancient music was not as modern music an expression of infinites and interiorities. It is rather regarded as a plastic art concerned with surfaces and the determinate, like the art of sculpture in which the ancients truly excelled.

Compared to the universal music histories of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, “the listener” plays a minor, if any, role in the romantic discourse on ancient and modern music. While the 18<sup>th</sup> century historians used the notion of a certain mode of modern listening in the argument for the superiority of modern music, the romantics defend modern superiority with reference to the expressive content of modern music. The modern listener is merely characterized by being in possession of a Christian soul, and thus the means to recognize the expressive content of modern music.

## Ambros's reconnection with the Greeks

August Wilhelm Ambros's (1816-1876) *Geschichte der Musik* (five volumes 1862-82, vol. 4 and 5 were published posthumously) is the only one among the canonical works of 19<sup>th</sup> century German music historiography that gives a substantial treatment to ancient musical cultures. Compared to the single-tome histories of his predecessors, Kiesewetter, Schilling and Brendel, Ambros's five volumes represent a much more ambitious undertaking. With regards to scope and purpose it has more in common with the pioneering works of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century than the immediate predecessors. The only comparable undertaking contemporaneous with Ambros's history is the Belgian musicologist François-Joseph Fétis's (1784-1871) five-volume *Histoire générale de la musique* (1869-76), which likewise sets aside a substantial amount of pages for the music of the ancient peoples.

The first volume of Ambros's history (1862) is devoted to ancient music (including Chinese, Indian and Arabic music), in which the Greeks are given the most prominent position. About 300 of its approximately 530 pages are reserved for the Greeks. The chapters on Oriental music are presented as preludes to the Greeks, and the last part, on the music of the peoples of ancient Italy (predominantly the Romans), is tellingly subtitled "Verfall und Untergang der antiken Musik". In the preface he declares that "mit Griechenland, tritt die eigentliche Musikgeschichte [...] entschieden hervor".<sup>24</sup> With this assertion he clearly marks a break with the fundamental precept of the romantic ancient-modern discourse. It is evident that Ambros has taken upon himself to rehabilitate the Greeks from what he sees as their unjust degradation in music history.

It has been remarked that Ambros had a pronounced classicist taste in music, with composers like Christoph Willibald Gluck and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart among his favorites. Norbert Tschulik has shown that Ambros associated the classical style with the aesthetic ideals of the ancient Greeks, as illustrated in his use of expressions as "den Griechen Gluck," or in his description of Mozart as "ein spätgeborener Grieche."<sup>25</sup> I will interpret Ambros's treatment of ancient Greek music as consistent with his classicist aesthetics and philhellenism, which bring him

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24 August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, F. E. C. Leuckart, Breslau, p. xvii.

25 Norbert Tschulik 1978, "August Wilhelm Ambros und das Wagner-Problem: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Musikkritik und der Wagner-Rezeption", *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 29, p. 156.

in conflict with the romantic dissociation from the ancient tradition. It is not, however, the romantic writers (which includes his uncle, Kiesewetter) that Ambros identifies as the main wrongdoers against the Greeks. The blame and responsibility is instead placed on the shoulders of Johann Nikolaus Forkel.

### **Ambros's replacement of Forkel's image of the Greeks**

The volume on ancient music covers the same chronological scope as Forkel's first volume, and Ambros makes it clear from the beginning that his ambition is to replace the image of ancient Greece presented by his predecessor. In a relatively short preface Ambros uses almost two whole pages to illustrate and criticize what he calls the "antigriechische Geist oder Nichtgeist Forkel's."<sup>26</sup> He accuses Forkel of portraying the Greeks in an undeservedly unflattering light, which, as he claims, has had a detrimental effect on the image of Greek music in Germany ever since.<sup>27</sup> Forkel's treatment of the ancient sources are derided, not least his persistent tendency to naturalize and rationalize the Greek pantheon. Up for ridicule is Forkel's suggestion that the gods, demigods, heroes and events described in Greek mythology refer to real humans and their deeds, which were later distorted by the naïve Greek mind with its tendency to magnify important historical persons and events, so as to bring them into the sphere of the divine.<sup>28</sup> What Forkel had introduced as an enlightened and ethnologically informed method of text interpretation, is now 74 years later

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26 August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. xii.; Ambros was not the first to criticize Forkel's treatment of the Greeks. Vincent Duckles writes that "Friedrich Schlegel, after reading Forkel's history of music, said: 'this man understands less about the Greeks than a eunuch does about love, and less of music than a Russian does of humanity.'" Vincent Duckles 1968, "Johann Nikolaus Forkel: The Beginning of Music Historiography", p. 281.

27 "Seine Verachtung der antiken Musik ist wenigstens für Deutschland maassgebend geworden [...]." August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. xiii.

28 In his ardor to provide rational explanations, Forkel ends up suggesting that the myths surrounding a figure like Apollo indicates that there had existed a real human being with that name, who did many good deeds while being alive, and more significantly for the music historian, must have been a very accomplished player of the lyre. He furthermore suggests that one should assume that Dionysus/ (Bacchus) was a person that in his youth was inclined towards drunkenness and dance, and he finds it fit to advance the hypothesis that his followers, demigods like field- and wood-spirits and the Satyrs, in reality were orangutans. Ambros sarcastically adds that if the gods were humans and the half-gods were orangutans, one should be excused to assume the heroes being baboons. Ibid., p. xiii. Forkel's strategy of interpretation belongs within a tradition that originated among the ancients themselves, and which was later taken up by Christian writers. The third century B.C. pagan philosopher Euhemerus is attributed the invention of this so-called "euhemerism," the strategy of "humanizing" the ancient pantheon by regarding the deities as merely heroes deified by later writers, as their human, although admittedly heroic, deeds recede into time. James W. McKinnon 1978, "Jubal vel Pythagoras, Quis sit Inventor Musicae?", *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 1, p. 9.

perceived as outdated, and somewhat naïve. “Eine Geschichte *griechischer* Tonkunst soll meines Erachtens etwas anderes sein als ein Potpourri von Mythen und von Histörchen und Anekdoten aus dem Athenäus, Plutarch, Lukian u.s.w. [...].”<sup>29</sup> Ambros states that his ambition is to show how music played an important role in Greek society, and that it enjoyed a status similar to that of the visual arts and poetry.

Although Ambros’s historiography reconnects with the universalistic scope of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it still maintains some of the traits of his romantic predecessors. The most prominent of these romantic traits is his insistence on the music-plastic opposition and the related assertion that the Greeks, despite their many merits, ultimately failed in the art of music due to their artistic spirit being at odds with the romantic nature of music. Nevertheless and somewhat paradoxical, his romantic view on ancient music taken into consideration, Ambros asserts that music history (die *eigentliche Musikgeschichte*) begins with the ancient Greeks. This claim of origin on behalf of the Greeks is done both with regards to theory – where the Greeks are seen as originators of musical thinking (i.e. music addressed as music), as well as practice. The decisive step taken by Greeks in the field of musical practice was to emancipate music from its non-musical obligations, and in so doing, facilitating the cultivation of music for its own sake, for the sake of musical beauty.

*Bei den Griechen wird die Musik zuerst und zum erstenmale Selbstzweck. Man macht nicht mehr ausschliesslich deswegen Musik, weil sie den Tanz regelt, oder die Festesfreude erhöhen hilft, oder weil sie zur Feierlichkeit des Opfers passt; man macht Musik, weil sie an und für sich, ohne weitere äusserliche, zufällige Bestimmung zu diesem oder jenem Zwecke, etwas Schöne ist.*<sup>30</sup>

This emphasis on musical autonomy is similar to the one found in Forkel’s history, presented in the last chapter. Music could well be autonomous even though it subsists together with poetry, dancing, religious rituals etc. Music loses its autonomy at the moment it forfeits its own principles, humbling itself to a parasitic existence as unconnected tones and sounds, embellishing its host media. Music enters history as itself at the moment when this freedom is realized. This moment of origin occurs

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29 August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. xviii.

30 Ibid., p. 218.

when musicians begin to fashion the successions of tones after musical principles, and the audience starts attending the tones with an eye for musical beauty.

Ambros mentions a number of facts and presumptions as circumstantial evidences for attributing the invention of music to the ancient Greeks.<sup>31</sup> Among these are the Greeks' deep sense of beauty, and the Greek writer's treatment of music as an equal to poetry. Ambros might have been confident that none of his readers would doubt the Greeks' sense of beauty in poetry or the plastic arts. As we have seen, there had traditionally – at least among music historians – been less confidence about the merits of Greek music. Furthermore, he points out that a large number of musical artists are mentioned by name in the Greek sources. He contrasts this with the relative absence of musicians mentioned by name in the contemporaneous sources from the Orient.<sup>32</sup> This is interpreted as a sign that musicians must have enjoyed a relatively exalted position in Greek society, as compared to their status in other ancient cultures. In relation to this, Ambros points to the fact that the Greeks constructed buildings specifically made for musical performances, particularly with the purpose of providing space for music competitions. This last point is important for Ambros's argument. Advancing something akin to an institutional explanation of the origin of music, Ambros argues that the Greeks initiated a revolution in listening in response to the need for judging the relative merit of contestants in music competitions.

We saw earlier how Forkel tied the evolution of music to the evolution of the soul, where the latter provided the conditions for the former. Romantic musicology advanced a similar idea of an inner connection between musical practice and the human soul/spirit. The romantics were in general more focused on origins than progress, revolution rather than evolution; the latter merely considered the temporal unfolding of the telos already contained in the origin.

In these matters Ambros positions himself somewhere in between Forkel and the romantics. Like the romantics he emphasizes the importance of origin and essence, in the sense that the origin determines the essential nature of the phenomena. However, he diverges from the romantic position in his insistence that the nature of modern music could only partly be explained by its Christian

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31 Ibid., pp. 217-218.

32 Ambros does not give us any clear definition of what he refers to by "the Orient". This is not untypical for the musical writings of the time, where the term could be used to denote about every nation on the Asian continent, often mashed together without properly discrimination, believed to be united by a set of similar characteristics. See e.g. David Gramit 2002, *Cultivating Music: The Aspirations, Interests, and Limits of German Musical Culture, 1770-1848*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 59.



origin.<sup>33</sup> The idea he seems to propound is rather that music has gained additional traits as it traversed historical time. This accumulative conception of music history points back to the historiography of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## The Greek invention of listening

In the preface to the first volume of *Geschichte der Musik* Ambros denies that music historical explanations could be based on theories of the evolution of human spirit (Geist).<sup>34</sup> Later, at the beginning of the section on Greek music, he suggests that the causes of music historical revolutions and evolutions might be of a more prosaic kind. The origin of (modern) music is here portrayed as a byproduct of an institutionalized practice grounded on non-aesthetical motives. Music's leap into history is presented as a listener-driven revolution, initiated by discoveries deriving from the Greek's extensive cultivation of competitive practice in relation to music. Ambros notes that competitions played a central role within several spheres of Greek culture. Different kinds of competitions took center stage in the religious festivals, be it sport (like the Olympic Games), or artistic activities like theatre/drama and music. In musical competitions, unlike in sport – where the winner is decided by the use of visual evidence, e.g. one's ability to arrive first to the finish line or to throw an object the furthest distance – the relevant parameter in artistic production is perfection. The yardstick for musical excellence could only be established by cultivating a specific mode of relating to the music, i.e. an evaluative/judgmental attitude of listening.

Die Aufgabe, vor einer gebildeten Hörschaft mit ausgezeichneten Wettkämpfern um den Preis ringen zu müssen, machte andhaltende Vorübungen nöthig, deren Folge keine andere sein konnte, als dass sich die Behandlung der Instrumente, des Gesanges, von

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33 In the first chapter of the second volume (1864) Ambros presents a kind of compromise between the positions of Kiesewetter on the one side and Hoffmann, Schilling and Brendel on the other, in that he admits that the music of the early Christians was based on ancient traditions, but that it at the same time was imbued by the spirit of Christianity. "Der neue Geist baute seine Welt aus gegebenem Stoffe. Man darf von der Musik der ersten christlichen Zeiten annehmen: sie sei zuerst Volksgesang gewesen, gegründet auf Art und Weise der gleichzeitigen antiken Tonkunst, aber durchdrungen, gehoben und getragen vom neuem christlichen Geiste." August Wilhelm Ambros 1864, *Geschichte der Musik, Zweiter Band*, F. E. C. Leuckart, Breslau, p. 11

34 August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. viii.

einfacher Richtigkeit der Tonangabe und Tonverbindung allmählig zur Feinheit des Vortrages, zu ausdrucksvoller Schönheit erheben, und endlich sogar zur entschiedenen Virtuosität reffiniren musste. Die Nothwendigkeit, zwischen mehreren vorzüglichen Musikern diesem oder jenem den Preis zuerkennen zu sollen, machte den Zuhörern eine Ausbildung des Gehörs sowohl als des künstlerischen Geschmacks nöthig, welche sie befähigte, auf die feinsten Unterschiede der Vortragsweise kennerisch einzugehen.<sup>35</sup>

Out of the needs of judging musical performances emerged the figure of the listening connoisseur judge. The musical judge of ancient Greece had to acquire the ability to attend to his own sensations in such a way as to be able to compare the music to an inner yardstick of musical perfection, formed on the basis of previous experience. This ability was to be attained through practice. Ambros presents the invention of listening as a practical necessity, not deriving from considerations of an aesthetical nature, but from the need to measure where measurements could not be obtained by other means. Through this need to judge, the Greeks started cultivating a mode of listening that would provide the basis upon which our modern music history could unfold.

It is evident that Ambros's Greek listener has a lot in common with the 18<sup>th</sup> century expert listener, as we saw him theoretically formulated in the previous chapter. Like Wotton's "skilful Hearer", Ambros's Greek judge ventures into listening for the sake of collecting the premises for a subsequent judgment. The judge listens for perfection as well as flaws, taking equal interest and pleasure in the identification of both. What Wotton and his followers posited as a modern invention, is now attributed to the Greeks.

There is an emphasis on the one-sidedness of Greek artistic spirit in Ambros's account, which aligns him with the romantic theories of ancient music. Similar to the romantics, he holds that the nature of the Greek mind finds its proper expression in the plastic arts. Even the non-plastic art forms are affected by the plastic nature of Greek artistic spirit. This inner tension between media and artistic spirit is most forcefully felt in music.

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35 Ibid., p. 218.

Die Musik ist aber die der Plastik am meisten ferne Kunst. Wo das Gebilde der Skulptur in greifbarer Gegenwart vor uns steht, seine ganze Bedeutung in die äusserliche körperliche Bildung setzen muss, öffnet uns die Musik in ihren verwehenden Klängen unbekannte, nicht in Worten, nicht in Gebilden auszudrückende geistige Tiefen – in der Plastik zieht sich das Kunstgebilde vor uns zum ganz bestimmten Individuum zusammen [...], in der Musik öffnet sich uns ein gränzenloses Reich, dessen Anfang und Ende Niemand kennt. Die Plastik ist die eigentliche *classische*, die Musik die eigentlich *romantische* Kunst. Die Musik der Griechen war nun, wenn der Ausdruck auch hier noch erlaubt sein kann, ebenfalls *plastisch*, so weit Musik es zu sein vermag.<sup>36</sup>

Ambros is here reiterating the romantic objection to ancient music: the artistic spirit of ancient Greece is antithetical to the true determination of music as a romantic art, which expresses itself in a spiritual depth that eludes conception (or plastic delimitations). The foremost trait of the plastic is its distinctness. However, clarity and distinctness come at a cost: the loss of depth. Greek artistic spirit favors surface without depth. However, there is a sense in which Ambros turns this deficiency to the advantage of the Greeks. The plastic orientation of the Greek mind is formulated as an asset when it comes to counter the dangers inherent in music, which follows from its very determination of music as art: its inward orientation towards the illimitable undeterminable, that which evades objectification.

The theoretical writings on musical aesthetics at the time – like the treatise *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (1854) written by Ambros's close friend Eduard Hanslick – tended to emphasize how true aesthetic enjoyment is conditioned on a contemplative distancing towards the musical object.<sup>37</sup> The failure to enter into aesthetic contemplation leaves one exposed to the danger of losing oneself in the music. The idea is expressed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in one of his lectures on the philosophy of music. “Wenn man nicht eigentlicher Kenner ist, der sich nicht mit den Feinheiten des Generalbasses beschäftigen kann, so fällt man bei der Instrumentalmusik leicht in Träumerei, in

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36 Ibid., pp. 220-221.

37 “Ruhig freudigen Geistes, in affectlosem, doch innig-hingebendem Genießen sehen wir das Kunstwerk an uns vorüberziehen und feiern erkennend, was Schelling so schön ‘die erhabene Gleichgültigkeit des Schönen’ nennt. Dieses Sich-Erfreuen mit wachem Geiste ist die würdigste, heilvollste und nicht die leichteste Art, Musik zu hören.“ Eduard Hanslick 1990, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen: Ein Beitrag zur Revision der Ästhetik in der Tonkunst, Teil 1: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, Dietmar Strauß (ed.), Schott, Mainz, p. 138.

einen assoziierenden Gang von Vorstellungen – veranlaßt mehr oder weniger von dem, was unmittelbar exponiert wird.“<sup>38</sup>

The plastic orientation of the Greek mind counters the tendency to fall into reveries. The Greeks’ orientation towards surfaces rather than depths, observing outlines rather than immersing in contents, facilitated a platform from which the invention of listening could be accomplished. “Die Musik öffnete dem Griechen kein romantisches, gränzenloses Wunderreich, aus dem räthselhafte Schauer oder Entzückungen wehen [...]“<sup>39</sup> The Greeks were thus in a favorable position as to be able to instigate the aesthetic distance required for establishing an observational position vis-à-vis the music.

## Greece and the Orient

In order to highlight the merit of the Greeks, Ambros, on several occasions, refers to the musical culture of the Orientals as contrast. The strategy of defining Greece and the Orient in relation to each other, as poles of opposites, goes back to the ancient Greek writers themselves.<sup>40</sup> In Ambros’s juxtaposition of the two peoples, the Orientals take on a somewhat similar role in relation to the Greeks as that given the ancients in relation to the moderns in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century music historiography. The people of the Orient failed to develop a musical culture – in the sense of cultivating music for its own sake (i.e. beauty) – because the listening audience lacked the aesthetic distance of the Greeks. There is, as Ambros remarks, a reciprocal relation between artistic products and the recipient.

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38 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel 2004, *Philosophie der Kunst oder Ästhetik, Nach Hegel, Im Sommer 1826, Mitschrift Friedrich Carl Hermann Victor von Keller*, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München, p. 194.

39 August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. 221.

40 Dirk T. D. Held, 1997, “Shaping Eurocentrism: The Use of Greek Antiquity”, in John E. Coleman & Clark A. Walz (eds.), *Greeks and Barbarians: Essays on the Interactions between Greeks and Non-Greeks in Antiquity and the Consequences for Eurocentrism*, CDL Press, Bethesda (Maryland), pp.256-257.; The Greek-Orient antithesis gained new currency in the wake of the Greek war of independence against the Ottoman Empire that raged between the years 1821-1832. In Europe, and Germany in particular, there was a great deal of sympathy for the Greek cause, which also resulted in volunteers for military service on the Greek side. For an assesment of the war’s significance for German philhellenism see: Karl Christ 1999, *Hellas: Griechische Geschichte und deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft*, Verlag C. H. Beck, München, p. 13.

Die beiden Faktoren jedes Kunstgenusses – der darbietende Künstler, der geniessende Empfänger – forderten einander in solcher Weise auf das Entschiedenste, da ihre beiderseitige Stellung eine ganz andere war, als die des Orientalen, der im Halbschlafe der Verdauung, im Behagen der Weinlaune träumerisch und passiv die Töne an sich vorübergleiten liess, womit ihn der Miethling oder Sklave zu ergötzen suchte. Der Makel, der dort auf der Miethlings- und Sklavenkunst lag, verschwand, wo freigeborene Griechen vor ihresgleichen, ja vor den Landesgöttern selbst, mit Lyra oder Flöte um den Preis ringen durften. Der eigentliche Nationalgott der Hellenen, der jugendlich schöne Sonnengott Apoll[o] war zugleich der Musenführer und die Lyra sein Symbol [...].<sup>41</sup>

Ambros evokes several well-known stereotypes about the Oriental peoples, many of which have their origin in ancient Greece. The Oriental listener is described as passive and lacking self-determination and freedom. The expression “freeborn Greeks” alludes to a perceived difference in the political and legal status between the peoples of Greece and their neighbors to the east. This image of the Orient, as politically governed by strong tyrants and its population reduced to the status of slaves, has its origin in Greek thought itself.<sup>42</sup> The Greek city states, on the other hand, were seen as havens of freedom, where all freeborn men partook in the governing of the state. Ambros aligns this perceived difference in “outer” or political freedom with an inner freedom of the soul in the sense of Immanuel Kant’s negative definition of practical freedom as “die Unabhängigkeit der Willkür von der *Nötigung* durch Antriebe der Sinnlichkeit.”<sup>43</sup>

A few pages after the above quoted passage, Ambros returns to the light metaphor inherent in his earlier description of the Greeks as the followers of the sun god Apollo. Again it is the Orientals who provide him with the contrast, here specified as the peoples of India. Ambros likens the Greek attitude to music to their mythopoetics, both are characterized by the Greek propensity towards clarity and distinctness.

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41 August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, pp. 218-219.

42 Dirk T. D. Held, 1997, “Shaping Eurocentrism”, p. 257.

43 Immanuel Kant 1794, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* 2, Wilhelm Weischedel (ed.), Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, p. 489 (A534/B562).

Den Griechen war (wie den Indianer) die Musik Göttergabe und Göttersache. Aber ihre Mythendichtung zerfließt nicht wie jene der Hindostaner in gestaltlose Phantasmagorien, sie tritt so lebensfrisch und lebenskräftig auf, dass man geneigt ist, es ganz in der Ordnung zu finden, wenn jene Mythen die Geschichte von Hellas eröffnen und ein zauberhaftes Morgenlicht dort verbreiten, wo die Geschichte anderer Völker meist noch in Nacht und Dunkel wandelt. Die griechische Musikgeschichte macht keine Ausnahme.<sup>44</sup>

Metaphors of day/night and light/darkness were commonly used in ancient Greece. This metaphorical field is today especially associated with the Platonic school of philosophy, where day/light denotes wisdom, orderliness (oneness), truth and the good, while night/dark represents its opposites: foolishness, lack of wisdom, the false, the evil etc. Plato did not invent this system of light and dark, it was widely used in ancient Greece long before Plato's time.<sup>45</sup>

The metaphors of light and darkness point towards a chain of oppositions structuring Ambros's conception of listening and its antithesis. Greek listening is placed within a metaphorical field structured around light and the sun (god), which points towards qualities like clarity, distance, contemplation, reason and freedom. The darkness of the Orient is associated with formlessness, immediacy, immersion, irrationality and the lack of freedom.

In his description of the musical culture of the Assyrians, Ambros gives an even more elaborate expression of his "orientalism" (in Edward Said's sense of the term) in describing how the Orient diverges from its Greek and Hebrew counterparts, both in war and in peace.

Die assyrische Musik scheint sich nirgends über den Standpunkt einer Sache des blossen baren Sinnengenusses erhoben zu haben, ein Standpunkt, auf den sie im Oriente noch heutzutage insgemein beschränkt bleibt. Gewisse Züge orientalischen Lebens zeigen noch nach Jahrtausenden unverändert dieselbe Gestalt. Unerschrockene Tapferkeit, Eroberungslust und Herrschsucht, Grausamkeit gegen Gefangene im Kriege,

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44 August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. 222.

45 Walter Burkert, & Nanno Marinatos 2010, "Introduction", in Menelaos Christopoulos, Efimia D. Karakantza & Olga Levaniouk (eds.), *Light and Darkness in Ancient Greek Myth and Religion*, Lexington Books, Lanham (Maryland), pp. xv-xx.

Prachtliebe, stolzer Prunk, Lebensgenuss im Frieden, das sind die Züge, die wir aus den assyrischen Bildwerken herauslesen können. Assyrien war eine Grossmacht und seine Könige gewaltige Kriegsherrn, aber hatten sie die Waffen abgelegt, so konnten sie auch wohl, wie Sardanapal, in das träumerische Wohlbehagen eines üppigen Palast- und Seraillebens versinken. Bei solchen Gegensätzen kann Musik, wenigstens edlere Musik, nicht wohl gedeihen. Der Tumult der Schlachten und Belagerungen übertönt sie, und im Frieden soll sie für den Erdengott und seine begünstigten Untergötter nur ein gedankenloser Genuss mehr sein. Der Musiker, der Sänger erhebt sich nicht zum Range eines vom Göttlichen begeisterten Weisen, wie in Israel, in Hellas; er ist weiter nichts als einer der zahllosen Menschen, die für das sinnliche Wohlbehagen ihres Herrn und Meisters in Bewegung gesetzt werden.<sup>46</sup>

“‘Beauty is founded on intellectual freedom’ – this is the principal, basic thesis of Ambros’s æsthetic system [...]” Guido Adler once remarked in a biographical sketch.<sup>47</sup> If Ambros’s aesthetics is based on freedom, the Orient represents everything that is antithetical to beauty. In Ambros’s narrative the Orient is made into a symbol of the many possible ways of being unfree, be it subject to the whims of tyrannical rulers or the urges of one’s own body. The master is portrayed just as much a slave of his own bodily desires as his servant. The reference to earth-cults evokes the image of the orgiastic rituals of the East, which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century philological tradition is interpreted, in conformity with the Kantian distinction between freedom and pathology, as a celebration of immediacy between the human body and the environing nature.

The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was the heyday of German philhellenism. Ideals would eventually change in the disfavor of the Greeks. When I return to the Orient-Greece opposition in the fourth chapter, the radiance of the sun god has faded, and the musicologists have, following the instructions of their new Oriental idols, put earth back into the center of musical life.

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46 August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, pp. 178-179.

47 Guido Adler (translated by W. Oliver Strunk) 1931, “August Wilhelm Ambros (November 17, 1816 – June 28 1876)”, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 3, p. 363.

## Summary

During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a musical ancient-modern distinction emerged within a framework quite different from that which had structured the corresponding antithesis in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The division between the ages was now centered on the issue of religion and the orientation of mind, which religion was believed to enforce on the soul of its subjects. Classical heathendom was aligned with an outward orientation of mind, manifested in an inclination towards surfaces and the determinate. Sculpture was thus believed to be the art form which best corresponded to the ancient mind. Christianity, on the other hand, was described as a religion of perpetual transcendence, reaching out towards the illimitable and eternal – ideas best expressed through the medium of music, according to the romantics. Music was thus believed to have been born – as a romantic art – with the onset of Christianity.

Ambros does not seriously challenge this division, as he readily admits that music was unable to develop according to its true determination under the conditions of the Greek mind. However, he does not consider the Christian revolution a sufficient explanation for the emergence of modern music. Ambros's history dissociates itself from the romantic tradition, or at least the central notion of romantic music historiography, which required the total exclusion of the ancients from the family tree of modern music. Instead he holds that the ancient Greeks invented the contemplative observing mode of listening, from which music could enter history and later evolve into a true romantic art.





## Chapter 3

### *Stimmung*: Forkel's mechanization of the holy style

This chapter will focus on the notion of “attunement” (*Stimmung*) in the context of Johann Nikolaus Forkel's (1749-1818) defense of church music, presented in the introduction to the second volume of *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (1801). The introduction assumes the form of an extensive argument for the importance of music in church service. The argument is twofold. On the one hand, Forkel argues for the importance of music in general (as opposed to no music at all), on the other hand, his argument emphasizes the specific merits of artistic music (*Figuralmusik*) compared to congregational singing.

Forkel's defense of artistic music involves a synthesis of two established modes of conceptualizing music. The one has its origin in the Lutheran musical theology, where music is conceived as a means towards the purpose of preparing the soul for the word of God. The other belongs to an expressionist aesthetics, where music is seen as the language of the heart, with the power of arousing emotions and passions in the soul of the listener. Forkel is not the first one to merge these two conceptions. It has been shown that the artistic music has been justified, with reference to its ability to heighten devotion by arousing specific passions, at least since the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> There is however a novel element to Forkel's version of this argument, namely his use of the term *Stimmung* with reference to the mechanism through which music brings the soul to devotion.

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1 Joyce Irwin 1993, *Neither Voice nor Heart Alone: German Lutheran Theology of Music in the Age of the Baroque*, Peter Lang, New York, pp. 127-139. Irwin argues that already the early Lutheran church permitted the use of musically aroused passions for theological purposes, which contrasted with the more reserved attitude to music of the Calvinists. “[T]he tendency to claim that the stirring of the affections was connected to the divine source of music separated Lutherans from Calvinists. [...] [W]hereas for Calvinists the psychological perspective remained distinct from the theological, Lutherans integrated the two perspectives into one theological claim.” Ibid., p. 23.

I will begin with a preliminary presentation of Forkel's notion of attunement as well as a brief outline of the term's etymology and history of use. I will then seek to answer the question: who is the implied interlocutor representing the antagonistic position in Forkel's defense of church music? I will suggest that this interlocutor is to be found within the debates on church service and church music, which had haunted the Lutheran church since the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The musical issues in these debates centered on the relative merits of congregational singing as opposed to artistic music. The last part of the chapter will focus on the strategies employed by Forkel in order to deliver an argument for the use of artistic music in church. I will argue that his defense involves a merger of principles derived from the mechanics of air and the human body with a conception of music as a medium of the Holy Spirit derived from Lutheran orthodoxy. Although Forkel's defense of church music seems to be rather unique in the history of musicology, the mechanical notion of divine attunement seems to be prefigured in theological writings of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## ***Stimmung* - attunement**

The second and final volume of Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (1801) was published 13 years after the first, which had covered the music of the heathen cultures of the ancient Egyptians, the Hebrews, Greeks and Romans. The second volume commences with the introduction of music into the service of the church in late antiquity/early middle ages, and ends with the generation of composers active in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. It thus builds on the first volume in the sense that it continues where the former left off in terms of temporal progression. Unlike the romantic generation which would influence the music historical thinking in the subsequent decades, Forkel does not make any qualitative distinction between ancient and modern music, or the ancient and modern listener. He could therefore without any sense of paradox begin the volume on Christian music by highlighting the universally enjoyed benefits of music. He remarks that although the music enjoyed by man in his primitive stage was of a "very raw" kind, it still served the noble purpose of strengthening social bonds in primitive society.<sup>2</sup> We have already seen Forkel's

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2 "Obgleich diese ursprüngliche Musik nicht anders als sehr roh gewesen seyn kann, so hat sie doch schon in den frühesten Zeiten die Wirkung gehabt, die Bande der ersten gesellschaftlichen Verbindungen fester zu knüpfen." Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Zweyter Band*, p. 2.

penchant, richly attested in the first volume, for rationalizing the wonders recounted in ancient sources. In the second paragraph of the introduction to the second volume he returns to this interpretive strategy in order to bring support to his claim for the social benefits of music.

Hermes, Orpheus, Amphion und andere mehr, waren also nichts anders, als solche weise Menschen, die die Kraft der Musik aufs menschliche Herz zuerst bemerkten, und für ihre Zeitgenossen einen wohlthätigen Gebrauch davon machten. Sie weckten dadurch menschliche Gefühle für Ruhe, Frieden und gesellschaftliche Glückseligkeit in den Gemüthern auf, machten nach und nach gesetzlichen Zwang erträglich, und leiteten dadurch allmählich die Menschen zu solchen gesellschaftlichen Vereinigungen, die in der Folge die Grundlage großer und gebildeter Staaten geworden sind.<sup>3</sup>

Forkel interprets the descriptions of musical wonders, ascribed to various demigods in the ancient sources, as magnified accounts of the work of accomplished musicians. These musicians were after their death elevated to the status of supernatural beings, although they were merely exploiting the natural forces inherent in music. According to Forkel the cause behind this musically enforced sociability resides in music's inborn ability to awaken sentiments beneficial for communal life in the mind of the listener. This universal trait of music corresponds to the first class of effects that he had ascribed to ancient music in the first volume.

Throughout the introduction chapter Forkel refers to ancient and modern theoreticians on equal footing. A heathen writer like Plato could be used for substantiating the claim for the beneficial function of music just as much as a Christian writer. The reason is that human nature – again in opposition to the assertion of the later romantics – has always been the same.

Unter solchen Umständen ist es nicht zu verwundern, daß die Musik nach und nach die Theilnehmerin an allen menschlichen Angelegenheiten wurde, wobey das Hertz etwas zu thun hat. Die menschliche Natur ist zu allen Zeiten einneley gewesen. Man hat schon in den frühesten Zeitaltern eben so gefühlt, wie wir es noch jetzt fühlen, und wie man es

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.

bis ans Ende der Welt fühlen wird, daß kein Fest, woran eine Menge Menschen Theil nehmen soll, ohne Musik feyerlich genug begangen werden oder den Zweck erfüllen kann, um deswillen man es angeordnet hat. Der Ausdruck der Musik stimmt eine ganze Versammlung zu einerley Empfindungen, und wenn Worte damit verbunden sind, auch zu einerley Begriffen. Hieraus entsteht sodann jene allgemeine Theilnahme an einer gemeinschaftlichen Angelegenheit, im welcher alle einzelne Glieder einer großen Versammlung der Veranlassung des Festes gemäß, entweder sich mit einander freuen, oder mit einander trauren.<sup>4</sup>

Although Forkel does not make frequent use of the terms *Stimmung* or *stimmt* (“(at)tune”), he nonetheless applies the terminology in passages that, like the one quoted above, are central for understanding the mechanics of the musically aroused sociability. While spoken or written language presents ideas to the mind of the listener or reader, music presents the listener with “states of mind” (*Gemüthszustände*).<sup>5</sup> Although Forkel uses the expression “presentation” (*Darstellung*), states of mind are not just presented like a visual presentation observed at a distance. These musically presented states of mind are taken over by the listener through the mechanism of tuning. Music can be used to induce such states of mind in its audience as well as to maintain them, even to such a degree that they resound within the listener after the music is over. What Forkel advances here represents a variety of what Peter Kivy has labeled “the arousal theory of musical expression”, i.e. that music expresses an emotional content in virtue of arousing it in the soul of the listener.<sup>6</sup> The idea of emotional arousal is common in 18<sup>th</sup> century theories of artistic expressions.

The aesthetic category of “attunement” (*Stimmung*) has attracted some attention among literary scholars and art historians during the first decade of the new millennium.<sup>7</sup> While it played a

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4 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

5 Ibid., p. 7.

6 Peter Kivy 1984, “Mattheson as Philosopher of Art“, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 2, p. 250.

7 Two anthologies focusing on the category of “Stimmung” have been published during the past few years: Kerstin Thomas (ed.) 2010, *Stimmung: Ästhetische Kategorie und künstlerische Praxis*, Deutscher Kunstverlag, Berlin. & Anna-Katharina Gisbertz (ed.) 2011, *Stimmung: Zur Wiederkehr einer ästhetischen Kategorie*, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München. The classic study on “Stimmung” is, Leo Spitzer 1963, *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word ‘Stimmung’*, Anna Granville Hatcer (ed.), Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore (originally published as a double journal article in 1944 and 1945). Spitzer interprets Stimmung in the context of the older notion of world harmony.

central role in 19<sup>th</sup> century German aesthetics – often associated with the art discourse of (late) romanticism – present day scholars have interpreted it in the light of more recent issues treated under labels like environmental aesthetics and aesthetics of atmosphere.

Due to the fact that the term *Stimmung* was widely used in a music-aesthetic context during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the sources referred to in this chapter should not be taken as exhaustive. The selection of sources presented in this chapter underscores a particular narrative among a number of possible others. My choice of translating *Stimmung* as “attunement” or “tuning” instead of the more commonly used “mood” (or sometimes “atmosphere”), is likewise motivated in a particular context of interpretation, where acoustics and theology will be given special focus.

## Etymology

The word *Stimmung* has its origin in the proto-Germanic *stimna* or *stimma* denoting mouth (8<sup>th</sup> century), which later was metonymically transferred to cover voice and vote.<sup>8</sup> It was introduced to the domain of music through a further metonymical extension from mouth and speech to the (singing) voice, and from there to the different parts in polyphonic music, no matter if it was meant to be sung or played on instruments. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century the word *Stimmung* was used in the meaning of a harmonious tuning of musical instruments (metaphorically based on the harmonious singing together in several parts). Shortly thereafter it took to denote correctness, in the metaphorical sense of an attunement between a proposition and the facts of the world; as an accord between ideas and world. A proposition might be in harmony (*übereinstimmung*) with the facts of the world, otherwise it should be altered so as to make it in tune with the facts. The next important semantic expansion occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when *Stimmung* was used to refer to a mental disposition, mood or state of mind (*Stimmung* or *Gemüthsstimmung*). One usually distinguishes such mental attunement from feelings by the former’s lack of intentional objects. While one feels something in relation to something (e.g. feeling sad because of...), mood precedes this something. Instead it refers to the very orientation (attunement) of the subject towards the world as a whole (e.g. being in a sad mood). Rather than belonging to the contents of the world, moods are

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8 Wolfgang Pfeifer (ed.) 2004, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen*, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, München, p. 1364.

conceptualized as qualities belonging to the screen through which the world is viewed, influencing how the world is experienced and acted on. In a sense one can see the emergence of this notion of attunement prefiguring some of the ideas elaborated on by the German idealists around 1800. The subject of the mood is transcendental in the sense that it constitutes the world. It is in this context that attunement attains an important role in Kantian aesthetics, as the bridge between the natural and the normative, corresponding to the faculties of understanding and practical reason.<sup>9</sup>

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the term enters the aesthetic domain. David E. Wellbery's entry on "Stimmung" in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe* focuses on three fundamental aspects of its use in an aesthetic context.<sup>10</sup> First of all, attunements belong within the sphere of the emotional, but in opposition to feelings, attunements are not directed towards any specific object. Furthermore, and again in opposition to feelings, attunements do not merely refer to inner states of the soul, but also to the surrounding atmosphere; the term refers to something that is shared by the environing world and the perceiving subject. Finally and in extension to this, Wellbery emphasizes its communicative dimension. Attunements refer to shared emotional spaces, coordinating the outlook and disposition of its subjects, providing them with a shared platform for sensing, thinking and willing in the world.

## **The purpose and context of Forkel's introduction**

The introduction chapter of the second volume of Johann Nikolaus Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* is divided into three main sections together totaling about 80 pages. The headings of the three sections are: (1) "On the general use of music and its relation to human nature in general, and to religious feelings in particular"; (2) "On the contribution of music to the beautification and enhancement of the Christian worship"; (3) "On the causes of the present decline in the entire musical life of the church". The objectives of the introduction could be grouped together into three main points: (1) to provide a philosophical justification for the use of music in religious worship – a justification done with reference to the properties and capabilities of music in general; (2) to

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<sup>9</sup> David E. Wellbery 2003, "Stimmung", in Karlheinz Barck, et al. (eds.), *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe: Historisches Wörterbuch in sieben Bänden, Band 5*, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart, p. 709.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 704-705.

demonstrate that the current condition of church music represents a state of decline;<sup>11</sup> (3) while at the same time suggesting remedies for bringing it back on its proper track. Forkel's introduction does therefore not deal with historiographical issues, as one might otherwise have expected from a work presenting itself as a history of music. It is explicitly concerned with the present state of music in the service of the Protestant church.

In the following I will restrict myself to those issues which I find relevant for the purpose of investigating the discursive field surrounding Forkel's use of the notion of attunement. Among the mentioned objectives, Forkel's justification for the use of music in church will be given the main focus. I will also look into certain aspects of his critique of the current state of church music, primarily his discussion on the merits of artistic music relative to congregational singing. I find the distinction between these two musics (or rather music for listening as opposed to singing, if seen from the vantage point of the congregation) essential for understanding the context and motive behind Forkel's introduction of the notion of musical attunement.

## The Worship Wars

My contention is that the context for Forkel's defense of church music is to be found in the controversies surrounding the question of the proper use of music in the service of the church. Quarrels on the topic of church music raged from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century continuing throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century while gradually decreasing in intensity. The controversies have been comprehensively documented by Joyce Irwin (*Neither Voice nor Heart Alone* 1993) and Joseph Herl (*Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism* 2004). The controversies mainly concerned the proper use of music, and the main line of demarcation among the debating participants was therefore not the one separating abolitionists from apologists. It seems like the

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11 The decline declared by Forkel manifests itself in the use of inappropriate music or in the total removal of all music from the service of the church. He associates this musical decline with a moral/religious decline, and claims that tepidity against music in the church always accompanies an equal amount of tepidity against the public exercise of religion. In the foreword he even suggests that members of the clergy counteracting the use of music in church might unintentionally be advocating the case of the Devil. He paraphrases Hippolytus's saying that "die Abschaffung des Kirchengesangs [...] sey ein Zeichen, daß der Antichrist kommen werde [...]." Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Zweyter Band*, p. iv.; Hippolytus of Rome (170-235) was the most important of the 3rd century theologian active in Rome.



writers on both sides of the controversies could in large agree that there were two especially advantageous effects that could be achieved with the help of music in a religious context: the glorification of God and the edification of the congregation. The desirability of these goals was not controversial, nor was there any major disagreement about the fact that they could be accomplished with the help of music. The reason behind this relatively unanimous acceptance of the usefulness of music might be that both of the above claims were supported by several of the most authoritative texts in the Lutheran tradition including Luther's own writings.<sup>12</sup> The debate was by and large centered on the issue of what kind of music could best accomplish the mentioned beneficial goals.

On the one side stood those who favored the use of simple one-part songs; preferably a text in an understandable language set to a well known melody. The advantage of this kind of music was that it made it easy for the congregation to partake in the singing. On the opposite side stood those who advocated the use of artistic music, often referred to as "figural", i.e. music in several parts, often with instrumental accompaniment, and requiring professional (or at least learned) musicians and singers. Among the proponents of artistic music there were different fractions divided over the issues of the proper style of church music. Some would argue that the church should utilize the newest and most effective means of bringing the congregation into devotion, often with reference to new expressive styles emanating from Italy. Others would express a more conservative stance, objecting that the modern Italianate or theatrical styles stood in danger of arousing inappropriate passions in the congregation. Although the fear of the Italianate and theatrical is an integral part of the controversies from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the stylistic traits associated with these terms change in accordance with the progress of music history.<sup>13</sup>

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12 Joyce L. Irwin 1993, *Neither Voice nor Heart Alone*, p. 13.

13 For mid 17th century writers like Großgebauer, the Italian-theatrical style referred to the music of composers like Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) and Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654), whose compositions were under influence of the Venetian school represented by composers like Giovanni Gabrieli (ca. 1557-1612) and Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643). Joseph Herl 2004, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: choir, Congregation and Three Centuries of Conflict*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 116-117.; The so-called "cantata debate" during the first half of the 18th century revived the discourse on Italianate theatricality while highlighting the connections between the new church cantata to Italian opera.

## Debates on church music in early Lutheranism

Joseph Herl has shown that the issues over the merits of congregational singing and artistic music have its roots in the early Lutheran church.<sup>14</sup> Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1477-1541), a contemporary of Luther who even served as his deputy in Wittenberg during Luther's travels, delivered one of the first written testimonies of an attempt to reform the musical practice of the new church on theological ground. Karlstadt was skeptical of polyphony as well as plainchant if performed by professional musicians. The former was dismissed on the grounds that the unity of God (despite his threefold manifestation) demanded to be glorified through a unity in singing.<sup>15</sup> The use of professional musicians was generally discouraged by the remark that "if performance of the chant is to be of a high order, the singer must concentrate so intently on the music that by necessity he must first of all be a musician and only secondarily a human being at prayer."<sup>16</sup> Similar suspicions concerning the depth and sincerity of the musician's devotion would continue to be heard during the following centuries, as would the opposition between monody and polyphony and the underlying distinction between words and sounds. Even though Luther himself favored a more pragmatic approach in allowing the use of musical practices inherited from the Catholic Church, objections against the use of artistic music would regularly surface in the writings of Protestant reformers.

## Theophilus Großgebauer

The text that more than any would settle the premises for the debate during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and into the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the Rostock based theologian Theophilus Großgebauer's (1627-1661) *Wächterstimme auß dem verwüsteten Zion* (1661). It has been called "an enormously

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14 Joseph Herl 2004, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism*, pp. 107-108.

15 "Si ergo cantum in ecclesia permanere volueris, hunc non nisi unisonum veils, Vt sit unus dues, unum baptisma, una fides, unus cantus" Karlstadt quoted in, Robin A. Leaver 2007, *Luther's Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids (Michigan), p. 361 n.124.; Robin A. Leaver comments on the quote, "from the context of these theses by 'one chant' something other than traditional chant is meant: simple congregational singing." Ibid.

16 Karlstadt quoted in, Joseph Herl 2004, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism*, p. 108.

influential and controversial book,”<sup>17</sup> having “a more divisive effect in the discussion of the proper role of church music than any other work of the age in Germany.”<sup>18</sup> Großgebauer puts the current state of public worship under critical investigation in the eleventh chapter, where the current practice of music in Christian worship is mentioned among the causes of “des ungöttlichen ungeistlichen Wesens in unsern Kirchen.”<sup>19</sup> His position, in its basic outline, is the same as the one advanced by Karlstadt: artistic music should be avoided, while congregational singing should be encouraged. His objections to the former are based on a doubt about its usefulness – and the observation that it seems to have a detrimental effect on the congregation – accompanied by suspicions about the motives and devotional sincerity of the musicians.

Da sitzet der Organist, spielet unnd zeigt seine Kunst: daß eines Menschen Kunst gezeiget werde, soll die ganze Gemeine JESU CHRISTI da sitzen, und hören den Schall der Pfeiffen, darüber wird die Gemeine schläfferig und faul: etliche schlaffen; etliche schwatzen; etliche sehen, dahin sichs nicht gebühret; etliche wollten gerne lesen, können aber nicht, dann sie es nicht gelernet: könten aber durch die geistliche Gesänge der Gemeine sein gelehret werden, welches Paulus fordert. Etliche wollten gerne beten, werden aber durch das Saufen und Gethön so eingenommen und verwirret, daß sie nicht können.<sup>20</sup>

Even though Großgebauer here singles out the organist, his critique is aimed at all kinds of artistic music performed by professional musicians, be it vocal or instrumental. His point is that the professionalization of the musical worship has had the consequence of reducing the congregation to a passive audience, and thus preventing them from partaking in an active engagement with the word of God. His examples aim to illustrate that artistic music rather distracts the congregation from the central elements of the Christian worship. Großgebauer seems to have modeled the relation between musicians and congregation on his image of the Catholic Church. Just as the Pope and his clergy

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17 Ibid., p. 118.

18 Joyce L. Irwin 1993, *Neither Voice nor Heart Alone*, p. 79.

19 Theophil Großgebauer 1667, *Drey Geistreiche Schrifftten*, Joachim Wilden Buchhändlern, Franckfurt, p. 189.

20 Ibid., p. 209.

put themselves at the center of worship by reciting the holy word in a language foreign to the congregation – as well as making use of spectacular visual imagery and extravagant costumes – the musicians are accused of having introduced a similar extravagant self-promotion in the Protestant church. Großgebauer insinuates that the current practice of musical worship within the Protestant church has been orchestrated by the Pope, based on his assurance that the word of Christ read, sung and acted upon by the people is harmful to “the realm of the Pope.”<sup>21</sup> Musicians, being for the most part “unspiritual people” (*ungeistliche Leute*), are easily persuaded to partake in this “papal plot”. Their devotion is weaker than their vanity. Großgebauer’s point is that even though the musicians may not engage in an intentional conspiracy with the papacy, their attitude to church worship is similar to the one found in the Roman Catholic Church, and thus harmful to the purity of the Protestant church.

In the many writings following in Großgebauer’s footsteps published throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, this tension between musicians and congregation remains central. The same could be said about the more or less openly stated suspicions about the motives of the musicians, who would often be portrayed as a kind of self proclaimed clergy, but lacking any justifiable claim to moral authority.

## Christian Gerber

Forkel was well acquainted with the church music controversies. This is evident both from the text under present investigation, as well as his *Allgemeine Litteratur der Musik* (1792), where a summary of the relevant literature is given under the heading “Schriften von Feinden der Kirchenmusik und Kirchenmusiker”.<sup>22</sup> One of the mentioned enemies of church music and church musicians is the theologian Christian Gerber (1660-1731).

In his *Historie der Kirchen-Ceremonien in Sachsen* (1732), and under the influence of Großgebauer, whose *Wächterstimme auß dem verwüsteten Zion* is frequently cited, Christian Gerber launches an attack on the theatricality which he claims is currently contaminating the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>22</sup> Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1792, *Allgemeine Litteratur der Musik oder Anleitung zur Kenntniß musikalischer Bücher, welche von den ältesten bis auf die neusten Zeiten bey den Griechen, Römern und den meisten neuern europäischen Nationen sind geschrieben worden*, Schwickertschen Verlage, Leipzig, pp. 155-158.

services of the Protestant church. “Theatricality” is here referring both to religious plays as well as to artistic music in the so-called cantata style. The cantata style emanated from Italy and was disseminated through several genres of religious music that became popular in the German areas of Europe, like the church cantata and the “operatic” treatment of passion plays. Gerber’s accusations against the theatrical style are based on the claim that it is designed to stir passions without enforcing any edification. In other words, although the theatrical style might show itself effective during the performance, it nevertheless fails to enforce any lasting improvement of the soul of the listener. Gerber illustrates this with an anecdote.

So haben wir vor einem Jahre hier in der Nähe gesehen, wie die damals hier herum wallende Buß-Prediger mit ihren theatralischen Vorstellungen die Leute häufig zum Weinen bewegt, welche doch grossen Theils so gleich darauf in das Wirths-Hauß gegangen, und sich vollgetruncken, und es wieder angefangen, wo sie es gelassen hatten.<sup>23</sup>

This and other observations lead Gerber to the conclusion that the force of theatricality is merely temporary. It wears off with the silencing of the music or the end of the play. This is a serious objection, as it raises the suspicion that the passions evoked are not designed to assist devotion, but rather to distract the congregation away from the word of God. The underlying premise of the evaluation is that only music whose edifying force is of a lasting kind should be regarded as a worthy embellishment to the Christian service. Furthermore, to account for the reasons behind the pervasiveness of theatrical practices, Gerber invokes similar suspicions as those earlier raised by Großgebauer on the motives of the musicians. Musicians are accused of arousing passions in the congregation out of self-promotion, to show off their skills, rather than glorifying God and edifying the audience. They stand in front of the congregation as a false clergy, entertaining their senses rather than presenting them with an edifying source. If the latter had been the case, one would expect it to be manifested in the behavior of the congregation after leaving church. Instead Gerber

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23 Christian Gerber 1732, *Historie der Kirchen-Ceremonien in Sachsen, Nach ihrer Beschaffenheit in möglichster Kürzte mit Anführung vieler Moralien und specialen Nachrichten*, Raphael Christian Sauererßig, Dresden, p. 288.

insinuates that the musicians might be liable to the suspicion of leading the congregation into idolatry.

O wer da nur die ersten Buchstaben des Christenthums weiß, hat an allen solchen theatralischen Händeln einen Anschein, und suchet vielmehr das Theatrum seines Hertzens zu verändern, und das Christenthum inwendig in seiner Seele zu gründen. Die Heyden pflegten, wie wir bereits schon zu erwehnen angefangen, eines solchen theatralischen Gottesdienstes, und es ist je wol nicht zu leugnen, daß die Römischen Ceremonien in vielen mit den Heydnischen überein kommen.<sup>24</sup>

The pagans mentioned in the quote are probably a reference to the ancient Greeks and Romans and their use of theatrical plays during religious festivals. Gerber, like Gorßgebauer before him, likens the ceremonies of the Catholic Church to pagan idolatry. A chain of associated notions appears to guide Gerber's discourse onto the two opposing ways of musicking in church. Artistic-theatrical music could in virtue of the genealogy of its stylistic elements be linked with the Italian, which moreover leads it to be associated with Roman Catholicism and the papacy. Furthermore, the theatrical is linked with the visual character of the outer world, in opposition to the "theatre of the soul." There is a long history of linking the eye to idolatry within theological discourse.<sup>25</sup> Gerber aligns theatricality with a cult of the visual and the plastic. Musicians are like Aaron in the account given in Exodus 32:1-6, who constructs an plastic/visual idol in the form of a golden calf on the request of the Israelites (aka congregation), or like the papacy satisfying the spiritual needs of its subjects with exuberant visual displays. One might think that music as an aural phenomenon would escape the association with visual/plastic idolatry. However, Gerber's position on the issue highlights a characteristic trait of the theological debates on church music: it is not conceived as an autonomous category of art, but rather as an integral part of the spectacle which it accompanies. Gerber underlines the importance of the word in opposition to musical (and empty) sounds, and he emphasizes the importance of taking the word into one's own mouth, rather than merely hearing it.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>25</sup> As Michael O'Connell has shown, similar accusations of idolatrousness and popishness characterized post-reformation English debates on the theatre. Michael O'Connell 1985, "The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm, Anti-Theatricalism, and the Image of the Elizabethan Theater", *ELH*, Vol. 52, No. 2, pp. 279-310.

Gerber asserts that if music should be able to satisfy the true spiritual needs of the congregation, the current practice needs to be abolished and followed by a return to the recommendations given by Luther.

Hier siehet man aber, daß Lutherus eine gantz andere Kirchen-Music verlanget, als wir heut zu Tage haben: Der gantze Hauffe soll mit singen, spricht er. Bey uns aber kan der gantze Hauffe nicht mitsingen, denn es wird ein Text musicirt, der der Gemeine nicht bekannt ist, und sie kann auch vor dem Klang der Instrumenten die Worte nicht verstehen, wird gleich eine Arie musicirt, so ist sie auch gantz neu und unbekannt.<sup>26</sup>

Although Luther never finished his planned treatise on music, he was still considered an authority in musical matters. His scattered remarks on music were widely consulted and discussed by Lutheran theologians and musicians in the centuries following his death. It is evident that Forkel views Luther as a great authority, and he frequently refers to Luther's writings. In rounding off the introductory chapter Forkel quotes the whole of Luther's *Encomion Musices* (1538) printed across three pages. This is done for the purpose of showing "daß Luther nicht bloß auf den Chorlagesang, sondern mit dem wärmsten Eifer auf den Gebrauch der künstlichen Musica, das heißt, der Figuralmusik dringt."<sup>27</sup> Forkel's appeal to the authority of Luther emerges from the context of controversies on how to interpret Luther's view on church music. As Joyce L. Irwin has remarked, "Luther's ideas on music could lead in different directions depending on the perspective of the interpreter."<sup>28</sup> The writings of Luther might be used to support diverging opinions on the issue of artistic music and congregational singing. It is of vital importance to Forkel to show that the use of artistic music in church is not in conflict with the writings of Luther. The supporters of congregational singing seldom refrained from drawing on the authority of Luther, with reference to passages in his writings that were subservient to their cause. In the following I will briefly present the diverging tendencies contained within Luther's writings on music.

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26 Christian Gerber 1732, *Historie der Kirchen-Ceremonien in Sachsen*, p. 290.

27 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Zweyter Band*, p. 76.

28 Joyce L. Irwin 1993, *Neither Voice nor Heart Alone*, p. 7.

## Luther's musical theology

The devil, as Luther tells us, is the enemy of happiness and joy and the presence of the devil causes sadness and despair. Everything happy and joyful is of God, and everything that is of God is happy and joyful. This is, as Robin A. Leaver has shown, an idea Luther repeatedly expressed throughout his writings.<sup>29</sup> A metaphysical framework is thus constructed, linking godly and diabolical forces to the emotional life of humans. Music enters the picture through Luther's "profound connection between 'the sound of music' and the 'word of theology': both repel the devil."<sup>30</sup> Luther stresses the divine nature of music by emphasizing that it "is not an *inventio*, a work of humankind, but a *creatura*, a work of God."<sup>31</sup> Music causes happiness, and happiness is a sign of divine presence, and a corresponding absence of the devil. On several occasions he refers to the story reported in 1. Samuel 16:14-16, recounting how David drove away the evil spirit that had overcome Saul by playing the harp.<sup>32</sup> Luther's affirmative treatment of the story indicates that he held the view that performed (instrumental) music could accomplish the divine task of repelling the devil and bring happiness, just as much as singing. Firstly, the sound of David's harp is pure music and its divine force could therefore not be explained by the effective use of words. Secondly, the story tells of a clear differentiation between performer and audience. Saul merely receives the music sounding from David's harp, without himself partaking in the music making.

The critics of artistic music would therefore look to other passages in Luther's writings to further their own cause. One passage that is more subservient to such purposes is to be found in his lectures on the psalms. Luther takes the first sentence in psalm 95: "o come, let us sing to the lord" as point of departure, and makes it an emblem for the divine effect of music. Music invites everyone to join in. However, it is not just the human participants present in musical space that are invited in. More importantly "it can, not without sense, also be called 'invitatory' for the reason that the Holy Spirit is invited in the same way."<sup>33</sup> This conception of singing participation as a kind of evocation of the Holy Spirit was taken up by later promoters of congregational singing. The idea is

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29 Robin A. Leaver 2007, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, p. 93.

30 Ibid.

31 Robin A. Leaver 2009, "Luther on Music", in Timothy J. Wengert (ed.), *The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther's Practical Theology*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids (Michigan), p. 278.

32 Ibid., p. 287.

33 Ibid., p. 280.



elaborated on by Großgebauer who explicitly sets the divine forces at work in congregational singing in opposition to music merely listened to.

Der Apostel sagt: Es sind Psalmen, Lobgesänge und geistliche Lieder: diese Mittel braucht der H[eilige] Geist als seinen Wagen, darauff er in die Herten einzeucht, und es mit allerley Gottes fülle erfüllet. Wann jemand Psalmen singet, wie Paulus redet, im Geiste, das kann die Gemeine nicht bauen; wann aber die gantze Gemeine im Sinne singet, und gleichsam einer zu dem andern durch Psalmen redet, das bessert und machet voll Geistes. Keine schönere Zusammenstimmung kann erfunden werden, als eben diese: und ists nichts anders als ein Fürbild und Vorschmack der ewigen Versammlung im Himmel.<sup>34</sup>

Großgebauer holds a similar invitatory thesis as Luther in regards to choral singing. Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs are used by the Holy Spirit as a conduit to the hearts of the congregation, while mere passive listening would not suffice. The Holy Spirit could only enter through the medium of song as long as the congregation engages in singing participation.

The call for universal participation is even more strongly commanded in Luther's preface to the *Bapst gesangbuch* of 1545. The acceptance or decline of the invitation to sing-along is here taken as an indication of the presence or absence of true belief.

Denn Gott hat unser hertz und mut frölich gemacht, durch seinen lieben Son, welchen er für uns gegeben hat zur erlösung von sunde, tod und Teuffel. Wer solchs mit ernst gleubet, der kans nicht lassen, er mus frölich und mit lust davon singen und sagen, das es andere auch hören und herzu komen. Wer aber nich davon singen und sagen wil, das ist ein zeichen, das ers nicht gleubet und nicht ins new fröliche Testament, Sondern unter das alte, faule, unlustige Testament gehöret.<sup>35</sup>

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34 Theophil Großgebauer 1667, *Drey Geistreiche Schrifften*, p. 194.

35 Luther quoted in, Robin A. Leaver 2009, "Luther on Music", p. 277 n16.

Participation in singing is thus interpreted as a manifestation of divine redemption. It is not just a means by which to call forth the Holy Spirit. Participation in song is also viewed as a sign to be displayed in front of the assembly, showing that one is among those predestined for heavenly life.

The kind of music advocated in the above quotes from Luther and Großgebauer could be called the ideal of ecstatic participation. Participation in singing is at least partly interpreted as a sign of divine possession.

## From mouth to ear

Interestingly, Forkel quotes the passage from the *Bapst gesangbuch* approvingly, agreeing with Luther that the Christian religion is a religion of happiness, and that the happiness caused by Christ's redemption should be expressed through music. He does however add, quite contrary to Luther's conclusion, that:

Diese christliche Freudigkeit kann durch den bloßen Choralgesang nicht bewirkt und unterhalten werden; es sind dazu reine, klare, geläufige Stimmen und geschickte den heiligen Worten angemessene Melodien oder Modulationen erforderlich, die nur bey der Figuralmusik Statt haben und nicht von einer ganzen Gemeinde, sondern nur von geübten und gebildeten Sängern und Spielern bewirkt werden können.<sup>36</sup>

Forkel's argument for artistic music is twofold. First, artistic music is better equipped to express the Christian happiness/bliss than congregational singing, due to its more refined and effective use of the available artistic means. Secondly, artistic music's reliance on professional or semi-professional musicians guarantees greater success in the musical communication. The underlying supposition is that if the music should have the desired effect, it must be properly communicated to the listening audience. Forkel's argument involves a replacement of the ideal of the congregation as active

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36 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Zweyter Band*, p. 16.

participants in worship with that of a community of listening. The priority of bodily organs in worship is turned around. While Großgebauer and his followers had emphasized the importance of involving the singing voices of the congregation in order to make its members active participants in the worship, Forkel highlights the ear. Rather than engaging in ecstatic participation, Forkel's ideal congregation should instead be engaged in passive contemplation. Forkel's objection against congregational singing is thus partly based on its relative poverty of means of expression and partly on the inability of the congregation to properly communicate the expressions that are carried in the music. If not properly communicated from the mouth to the ear, it will neither accomplish any edifying and wondrous effects. He once more appeals to the authority of Luther when claiming that the quality of congregational singing in church has declined to the point that it "oft mehr Geheul als Gesang [ist], und zu dem herunter gesunken ist, was Luther schon zu seiner Zeit den *faulen Choralgesang* nannte, worin kein Leben, keine Zuversicht, kurz kein Ausdruck herrscht."<sup>37</sup> As we saw earlier, Forkel locates the attuning-power of music in its expression. Music without expression can therefore not enforce devotion and edification upon the assembly through the mechanism of musical attunement.

## The composer and the Holy Spirit

Forkel's idea that an edifying force might reside in the music itself was prefigured in writings from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Georg Motz (1653-1733), cantor and school music director in the city of Tilsit, maintained in his *Die Vertheidigte Kirchen-Music* (1703) that "the personal moral qualities of the artist are irrelevant to the production of spiritual music."<sup>38</sup> Instead he advanced what Joyce Irwin has described as a previously unknown twist on the traditional Lutheran thesis of the divine origin of music, by ascribing an important role to the Holy Spirit already at the phase of composition. "Künstliche compositiones sind keine närrische Einfälle; Sie kommen von dem Heil[igen] Geist, und nicht aus einem Weltgeist her."<sup>39</sup> Motz's book was directly addressed to Gerber's critique of

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>38</sup> Joyce Irwin 1985, "German Pietists and the Church Music in the Baroque Age", *Church History*, Vol. 54, No. 1, p. 38.

<sup>39</sup> Georg Motz 1703, *Die Vertheidigte Kirchen-Music, Oder klar und deutliche Beweis, Welcher Gestalten Hr. M. Christian Gerber, Pastor in Lockwitz bey Dreßden, in seinem Buch, welches Er Unerkandte Sünden der Welt nennet, in*

church music, and it was subsequently answered by the latter in an open letter published in 1704. Gerber here maintained his earlier assertion that music could not serve as praise of God if performed by godless people or people of another religion, nor if it distracted the attention of the congregation away from devotion.<sup>40</sup> The significance of Motz's claim that the Holy Spirit assists the composer in the creative process is that it highlights the musical object itself, rather than the context of performance. It represents a step in the direction of making the sound of (church) music holy in itself. In contrast to Luther's thesis that music in general is a divine *creatura*, Motz is here specifically writing about church music. This raises the possibility that musical styles could be holy in themselves, and that some styles are holier than others.

The idea is picked up by Forkel who introduces a notion of a holy style in order to counter the improper styles which he claims is often heard in church. "Ist dieser heilige Styl verloren, so sind mit ihm zugleich auch alle höhern Eigenschaften der Kunst, die Darstellung der höchsten, reinsten moralischen Gefühle verloren."<sup>41</sup> Although this cautioning is delivered in the context of his critique of the new style of church music, the beneficial properties of the holy style are likewise lost if not properly communicated to the listener. If music carries a holy content in the medium of sound – analogous to the holy word in the Bible – it puts a great deal of responsibility on the shoulders of the musicians. Distortion of the holy sounds could thus almost be likened to distortion of the holy words by heretics.

Motz's contribution to the debates is indicative of a tendency that Joseph Herl describes as "a change towards a more anthropocentric view of church music" during the early decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>42</sup> The tendency manifested itself in a greater focus on music as a means for arousing emotions in an assembly of listeners. The writers were less inclined to refer to the church assembly as "congregation" (*Gemeine*), instead favoring designations such as "audience" or "listeners" (*Zuhörer*). Herl interprets this as indicating a change in the view on the assembly from "active participants in the liturgy" to "passive spectators to be moved."<sup>43</sup> Motz's background as cantor and school music director is also typical for the new situation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast to the 17<sup>th</sup>

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*dem LXXXI. Cap. da Er von dem Mißbrauch der Kirchen-Music geschrieben, zu Verwerfung der musicalischen Harmonie und Bestraffung der Kirchen-Music zu weit gegangen*, [no publisher information], p. 37.

40 Joseph Herl 2004, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism*, p. 122.

41 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Zweyter Band*, p. 50.

42 Joseph Herl 2004, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism*, p. 123.

43 Ibid.

century, where pastors and theology professors made up the principle combatants in the “worship wars”, the 18<sup>th</sup> century sees the battle over church music increasingly dominated by musicians.<sup>44</sup> There is also a tendency at this time to distinguish between musicians and the music being performed. The purity of their hearts was downplayed in favor of the ability of the hand or the voice in transporting the holy sound from notation on paper to the ears of the congregation.

## **Divine ambience**

Forkel stands in the continuation of this tradition. His argument for artistic music is based on its ability to edify the congregation through expression. In the following I will argue that Forkel’s theory of musical expression emerges from a context of late 18<sup>th</sup> century ideas of acoustical forces and nerve function. Acoustics is the science that deals with the study of mechanical vibrations in elastic media. When Joseph Sauveur (1653-1716) coined the term (*acoustique*) at the onset of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was with reference to a science of sound. The phenomenon of sound obeys the laws of general mechanics in its physical form as vibrations in the medium of air. From the acoustical viewpoint music could be described as the art of manipulating air. Forkel proceeds from such an idea when he remarks that air as well as being the medium of sound, also is the medium in which the human body finds itself immersed, and which furthermore connects it to every other thing in the world, other humans as well as inanimate objects.

Der Mensch selbst ist allenthalben mit Luft, oder mit dem Vehikel des Schalles umgeben; er lebt darin wie in seinem Elemente. Er athmet Luft ein, haucht Luft aus, und hängt durch sie mit allem, was in der Welt ist, zusammen, so wie alle andere Körper, die eben so wie er mit Luft umgeben sind, mit ihm zusammenhängen. Außerdem sind seine festen Theile mit Nerven und Sehnen verbunden und überspannt, wodurch er gewissermaßen selbst eine Art von musikalischem Instrument wird, und endlich hat er

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44 Ibid., p. 122.

von der Natur noch ein besonderes Organ erhalten, welches ihn fähig macht, alle Veränderungen der ihn umgebenden Luft gewahr zu werden.<sup>45</sup>

It is this acoustical conception of man, and his character as an elastic object immersed in air, which facilitates his potential for being tuned. Nerves are the medium through which the soul connects with the surrounding air. One should also note the passive character of sound reception sketched out here, as illustrated by Forkel's description of man as "a kind of musical instrument." It is likely that Forkel is inspired by the neurological theories current in German at the time. Caroline Welsh has remarked that by "the middle of the eighteenth century, musical string instruments had become a privileged metaphor within the newly developing speculative theories on nerve and brain physiology."<sup>46</sup> Forkel seems to have taken this musically derived metaphor of the nervous system and brought it back into a musical context. I will return to the neurological context below.

## **(E)motions**

Motions in air are identified as the fundamental elements of music, not tones or numbers or other things posited by various philosophers throughout history.<sup>47</sup> A tone is a special case of the category of sound, and music is a combination of the sounds known as tones. This is what one could call the objective definition of music given by Forkel in the tenth and eleventh paragraph of the introduction. Subjectively, music manifests itself as an emotional speech. Forkel's theory of musical expression asserts that there is a reciprocal relationship between the objective and the subjective. The reason why the progression of aerial vibrations is experienced as an emotional speech is that the language of the heart expresses itself in movements. That is, music speaks the language of the heart because emotions and musical sounds have a common basis in movements. Forkel advances a physiological hypothesis to buttress his expression theory.

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45 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Zweyter Band*, p. 10.

46 Caroline Welsh 2012, "'Stimmung': The Emergence of a Concept and Its Modifications in Psychology and Physiology", in Birgit Neumann & Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Traveling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, De Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 270-271.

47 The motional theory was not new in itself, the acoustical conception of it was. The motional theory of musical sound had become an established part of musical thinking already during the European middle ages through the influence of the writings of Boethius (c. 480-524/525). Rob C. Wegman 2005, *The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe 1470-1530*, Routledge, New York, p. 167.

Die leidenschaftlichen Vorstellungen der Seele sind nemlich mit gewissen Bewegungen im Nervensystem, oder in den feinern Theilen des Körpers, welche man Lebensgeister nennen kann, unzertrennlich verbunden, und werden durch Wahrnehmung dieser Bewegungen unterhalten und verstärkt. Diese entsprechenden Nervenerschütterungen entstehen im Körper, wenn vorher in der Seele eine leidenschaftliche Vorstellung erweckt war, so wie umgekehrt in der Seele die leidenschaftlichen Vorstellungen entstehen, wenn vorher im Körper die verwandten Erschütterungen erregt worden sind. Die Wirkung ist gegenseitig. [...] Da nun die Erschütterungen des Nervensystems durch nichts so mächtig bewirkt werden können als durch Töne, so erklärt sich aus dem gegenseitigen Verhältniß der Luft- und Nerven- Bewegungen die Kraft und Gewalt hinlänglich, welche schon einzelne Töne auf das Herz des Menschen haben können. [...] Das gegenseitige Verhältniß der Luft- und Nervenerschütterungen ist daher der Grund und die erste Ursache alles musikalischen Ausdrucks, und aller der Wirkungen, die durch Musik hervorgebracht werden können.<sup>48</sup>

In the entry on “Ausdruck in der Musik” in his *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* (1771), the Swiss mathematician and writer on aesthetics Johann George Sulzer (1720-1779) advances a somewhat analogous thesis to that of Forkel, in which musical expressions are similarly referred back to a basis in motions. Sulzer begins by proclaiming that the very determination of music lies in the correct expression of sentiments (*Empfindungen*) and passions (*Leidenschaften*).

Der richtige Ausdruck der Empfindungen und Leidenschaften in allen ihren besondern Schattirungen ist das vornehmste, wo nicht gar das einzige Verdienst eines vollkommenen Tonstückes. [...] Der Ausdruck ist die Seele der Musik: ohne ihn ist sie

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48 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, Zweyter Band, pp. 10-11.

blos ein angenehmes Spielwerk; durch ihn wird sie zur nachdrücklichsten Rede, die unwiderstehlich auf unser Herz würket.<sup>49</sup>

The reason why the rhetoric of musical speech has such a persuasiveness on the heart is that it speaks the language of emotions and passions, that is, movements. However, it does not seem to be movements of aerial vibration that Sulzer has in mind, but rather archetypical motions connected with specific states of passion, which are also expressed in bodily movements and modulations of the voice. Music expresses emotions and passion by imitating (*abzubilden*) the corresponding motions. Sulzer thus advises the budding composer to study the speaking voice in order to observe how the influence of different passionate states manifests itself in both tone and tempo.<sup>50</sup> He asserts that it is among the important tasks of the composer to familiarize with the movements associated with specific passions, and be able to portray them with the available musical means, like harmony, melody, tempo, dynamics etc. It is evident that Sulzer here advances a version of the Aristotelian theory of expression, in which the arts are believed to express through “imitating the outward signs of inner emotions”.<sup>51</sup>

Forkel’s theory of expression is, in contrast, based on the principle of mechanical resonance, which has taken the place of Sulzer’s Aristotelian theory of expressive imitation. Forkel’s version of the expression theory is, in addition to being founded on an acoustical conception of musical space, fashioned over a theory of nerve vibration. It rests on the supposition that each of the airborne motions of tones or combinations of tones stand in a law governed relationship to motions in the nerves, which again correspond to specific passionate states of the soul. Music arouses a passionate state in the listener through the mechanisms of sympathetic vibration. The nerve receptors serve as mediators between air and the soul, transmitting vibrations of the air to the soul where they manifest themselves as passions and sentiments. If we relate this to the larger picture and Forkel’s notion of a holy style, we see how the whole system of musical transmission from the composer, musician, air and nerve receptors functions as a series of transmitters and conduits

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49 Johann George Sulzer 1771, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste in einzeln, nach alphabetischer Ordnung der Kunstwörter auf einander folgenden, Artikeln abgehandelt, Erster Theil, von A bis J*, M. G. Weidmanns Erben und Reich, Leipzig, p. 109.

50 Ibid., p. 110.

51 Alan Lessem 1974, “Imitation and Expression: Opposing French and British Views in the 18th Century”, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 27, No. 2, p. 326.



mediating between God and the soul. However, the idea of expression through resonance provides the basis for a much more ambitious theory. The ultimate purpose of religious music is to combine emotions and passions in such a way that they evoke a complete (re-) attunement of the soul.

Da die leidenschaftlichen Zustände der Menschen mannichfaltig sind, und jeder derselben mit eigenen Nervenerschütterungen vergesellschaftet ist, wodurch er sich von andern unterscheidet, so wird die Musik durch den zweckmäßigen Gebrauch der erwähnten Mittel vermögend, ihre Töne jedesmal von einer solchen Wirkung auf die Nerven zu wählen, wie sie den Eindrücken eines gewissen Gemüthszustandes ähnlich und angemessen ist. Sie hat es dadurch in ihrer Gewalt, nicht nur durch einzelne Töne schon sympathetische Gefühle der Freude, des Mitleids, des Trauens und des Trostes zu erregen, sondern auch innere Empfindungen der Seele, oder ganze Gemüthsstimmungen zu befördern, zu unterhalten, und eben dadurch auf Sittlichkeit und Besserung des Willens kräftig zu wirken.<sup>52</sup>

There are two senses of being musically tuned in Forkel's account. The one involves the immediate arousal of specific emotional states of mind in the soul of the listener, communicated through the mechanism of sympathetic vibration. This represents a version of the traditional idea of musical expression, despite the physiological elaborations involving the novel idea of a mechanism of sympathetic resonance. However, when Forkel writes that music could convey entire attunements of mind (*Gemüthsstimmungen*) in the listener, influencing moral life and improving on the will, one is confronted with a more comprehensive phenomenon than mere expressions of emotions. Forkel is here referring to what he believes is music's ability to modify the "mind" (*Gemüth*) of the listener, not merely through the experience of the musical expressions temporarily restricted to when the music is sounding, but also to make lasting changes to the fundamental orientation of the soul.

The idea of nerve vibration originates in the writings of the English philosopher David Hartley (1705-1757). Hartley's theory emerged from the context of an associationist psychology in which the mental activity of the soul is referred back to interactions (often conceived in terms of mechanical or chemical processes) between ideas and sense impressions. Hartley has been

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52 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, Zweyter Band, p. 11.

described as the first associationist to make a “significant foray into neurophysiological theory”.<sup>53</sup> He accomplished this with the help of conceptions that “were primarily based on the ideas of Sir Isaac Newton, who theorized that all bodies contain a hidden, vibrating subtle spirit (‘ether’), which caused particles to attract and repel each other over distances.”<sup>54</sup> This principle brought in from Newtonian physics was merged with a Lockean idea of association of ideas, where the formerly speculative principle of association was supplemented with a thesis to account for the physiological mechanism through which associations of ideas could be explained.

[Hartley] postulated that external stimuli caused small backward and forward motions, or oscillations, like the ‘trembling of sounding bodies,’ within the sensory nerves. The vibrating particles in the nerves were postulated to lead to diminutive vibrations (‘vibratiuncles’) in the soft, ‘medullary substance’ of the brain, which he believed was the seat of the rational soul.<sup>55</sup>

Although Hartley assumed that these vibrations in the central system would normally fade and die away after some time, he nevertheless claimed, as Stanley Finger points out, that “repeated exposure to a particular vibration could change the medullary substance so that it would be more likely to vibrate in a specific way when disturbed again and again.”<sup>56</sup> Hartley’s theory of association was based on the principle that, as Stanley Finger explains:

if two distinct vibrations repeatedly overlapped, the modifications in the medullary substance would be such that if just one vibrated, it would still be capable of triggering the vibratory changes of the other. Hartley further argued that a given sensation could bring forth many ideas, not just as a result of being synchronous but because of other

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53 Stanley Finger 1994, *Origins of Neuroscience: A History of Explorations into Brain Function*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 336.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., p. 337.

associationistic principles and the physics of resonance, simple ideas could be turned into very complex idea by such mechanisms.<sup>57</sup>

In Germany Hartley's theory of nerve vibrations was popularized by the physician and philosopher Melchior Adam Weickard (1742-1803), who supplemented Hartley's vibration-theory with the notion of a tuning (*Stimmung*) of the nerves. The mentioned complex of ideas was envisioned by Weickard, as Caroline Welsh has shown, "as a group of fibres which had acquired the same 'Stimmung,' i.e. they were tuned in harmony with each other so that all fibres belonging to one cluster resonated as soon as one of them was set in motion".<sup>58</sup> Welsh furthermore maintains that the "difference between Hartley's cluster of vibration and Weickard's 'Stimmung' of the brain is that the concept of 'tuning' allowed for the idea of 'retuning' (*Umstimmung*). [...] Like different musical keys, a specific 'Stimmung' of the brain would automatically enhance particular chains of association not common in another 'Stimmung'".<sup>59</sup>

The notion of an attunement of mind (*Gemüthsstimmung*, *Stimmung des Gemüthes*) is according to Welsh first introduced by Sulzer in his entry on "Tone in the reciting arts" (*Ton: Redende Künste*). "Es gehört unter die Geheimnisse der menschlichen Natur, daß einerley Sache gar sehr verschieden auf uns würket, ja nachdem wir uns in einer Lage befinden. Diese Lage, die man auch die Stimmung des Gemüthes nenne könnte, bringt also den verschiedenen Ton in dem Ausdruck der Rede hervor."<sup>60</sup> Sulzer continues by stating that a well-recited speech or poem could evoke this state (*Lage*) of the mind in the listening assembly through the effective use of the voice (i.e. the appropriate use of tone in the voice). In the present context, the most interesting feature of Sulzer's definition is the idea that the attunement of the mind conditions the receptive faculties, i.e. that the same thing might cause different impacts depending on the attunement of the mind of the recipient.

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57 Ibid.

58 Caroline Welsh 2012, "'Stimmung'", p. 272.

59 Ibid.

60 Johann George Sulzer 1774, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste in einzeln, nach alphabetischer Ordnung der Kunstwörter auf einander folgenden, Artikeln abgehandelt, Zweyter Theil, von K bis Z*, M. G. Weidmanns Erben und Reich, Leipzig, pp. 1159-1160.

Forkel's above quoted statement that music could influence morality and improve the will through conveying an attunement in the mind of the listener, seems to be referring to something similar to that expressed in Sulzer's idea that things have a different impact depending on the attunement of the recipient. Morality and the will are improved through a musical retuning of the receptive faculties in such a way that the good things and virtuous acts appear desirable, while that which is bad and sinful is perceived as unpleasant and thus avoided. The holy style refers to a certain progression of passionate states and sentiments which through its refined form of emotional speech conveys a complete re-attunement of the mind. Such an attunement of mind (*Gemüthsstimmung*) involves the orientation of the will towards a goal. To tune or re-tune a mind involves the attunement towards certain goals, possibly involving the replacement of former goals with new ones. We have now arrived at the core of Forkel's defense of church music. The basic contention is that music possesses the means to enforce lasting improvements on the human soul.

The entry on "Gemüthsstimmung" in Joachim Heinrich Campe's *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache* (1808) reads "die Stimmung des Gemüthes, der Zustand des Gemüthes, da es für die eine oder die andre Art der Eindrücke besonders empfänglich ist."<sup>61</sup> The definition emphasizes the way a tuning of the mind represents a configuration of the receptivity of different kinds of impression, implying that the way things are sensed (and acted upon) are determined by the attunement. A retuning of the mind involves a reconstitution of the receptive faculties, where the receptiveness towards certain forms of impressions is heightened while other impressions are muted. It is in this context that one must understand Forkel's statement that music can influence morality and improve the will through an attunement of the mind. The goal of religious music is to adjust the sensibilities of the congregation in such a way that it facilitates a practice of life most in line with the will of God.

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61 Joachim Heinrich Campe (ed.) 1808, *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache, Zweiter Theil*, In der Schulbuchhandlung, Braunschweig, p, 306.

## Devotional attunement

In the second section of the introduction, where Forkel deals with how music might embellish and elevate the Christian worship, he introduces the notion of devotion (*Andacht*), as an attunement of the mind that is communicated specifically through religious music. “Andacht”, so reads the entry on the term in the first volume of G. S. A. Mellin’s *Encyclopädisches Wörterbuch der Kritischen Philosophie* (1797), “[ist] die Stimmung des Gemüths zur Empfänglichkeit Gott ergebener Gesinnungen. Wenn nemlich das Gemüth durch irgend etwas fähig gemacht wird, solche Gesinnungen anzunehmen, die dem Willen Gottes gemäss sind, so ist der Zustand, worin das Gemüth sich befindet, Andacht.”<sup>62</sup> Devotion thus represents the state of the receptive faculties when it is tuned towards the divine element. It manifests itself in a heightened receptivity towards the will of God. Although Forkel seems to admit that devotion could be reached without the help of music, it is nonetheless promoted as a means to assist the soul’s entry into devotion. Music has the power to strengthen devotion and keep the congregation within the devotional attitude for longer time spans.

Unser Herz wird durch die heilige Sprüche in eine weit größere Andacht versetzt, wenn sie gesungen, als wenn sie nicht gesungen werden; die Kirche hat sich die Kirchenmusik immer angelegen seyn lassen, damit durch die Belustigung der Ohren das schwache Gemüth zur Andacht erhoben werde, denn die Musik stärkt die Andacht, und erhebt das Lob zur Entzückung. Sie verlängert jede andächtige Handlung, und bringt dauerhafte und bleibendere Eindrücke in die Seele, als diejenigen sind, welche eine überhingehende Formel von Worten begleiten, die nach der gewöhnlichen Art der Andacht hergesagt werden.<sup>63</sup>

Forkel is here alluding to a passage from St. Augustine’s (354-430) *Confessions* (from the 33<sup>rd</sup> chapter of the 10<sup>th</sup> book) where the advantages as well as the dangers associated with the use of

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62 G. S. A. Mellin 1797, *Encyclopädisches Wörterbuch der Kritischen Philosophie, Erster Band*, Bei Friedrich Frommann, Züllichau, pp. 203-204.

63 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Zweyter Band*, pp. 13-14.

music in Christian worship are discussed. St. Augustine warns about the risk of the worshipers becoming more engaged in the musical pleasures than with the text being sung. However, musical pleasures are also admitted to have some beneficial effects. Those who are not easily stirred to devotion by hearing the holy word recited might nonetheless be moved by the singing of the same text “so that through the delights of the ear the weaker mind may rise up towards the devotion of worship.”<sup>64</sup> St. Augustine explains “that when the sacred words are chanted well, our souls are moved and are more religiously and with a warmer devotion kindled to piety than if they are not so sung. All the diverse emotions of our spirit have their various modes in voice and chant appropriate in each case, and are stirred by a mysterious inner kinship.”<sup>65</sup> St. Augustine’s statement about the greater effect of the sung as compared to the recited word provides a general justification for the use of music in the Christian worship. The second quote with the reference to an “inner kinship” between music and emotions resounds in Forkel’s theory of devotional attunement. In the continuation of the last cited passage, St. Augustine warns about the dangers of the senses revolting against their natural subordination to reason. Another danger, entailed by the dictum that all emotions have their counterpart in music through which they are stirred, is that emotions not subservient to the Christian worship, or worse, even counteracting devotion, might be aroused by the sound of music. Although not elaborated on by St. Augustine, whose cautioning is directed towards music in general, such a warning about harmful music would resound throughout the history of the church.

## **Proper and improper church styles**

According to Forkel there is one specific kind of music that possesses the ability to evoke the proper devotional attunement. He variously refers to this music as composed in a holy style or church style. Although Forkel does not inform the reader exactly by which musical features the holy style is defined, he makes it explicitly clear that it represents something other than the styles utilized for comical operas and to various dance forms (of which he mentions minuets and polonaises). When this inappropriate or as he calls it “den verfehlten Styl” nevertheless is often encountered in

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64 Saint Augustine 1992, *Confessions*, Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Henry Chadwick, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 208.

65 Ibid., pp. 207-208.

church, it is due to the ignorance of those responsible for the music. They are liable to the accusation of not being able to distinguish secular merriment from what Forkel in this context calls the attunement of mind known as Christian joy.

Die Unerfahrenheit der meisten Kirchenkomponisten, Musikdirektoren oder Cantoren im wahren erbaulichen Kirchenstyl, ist oft so groß, daß sie kaum den Ausdruck jener Frölichkeit, die etwa in einem Tanzsale herrscht, von derjenigen Gemüthsstimmung, welche wir eine christliche Freudigkeit nennen, zu unterscheiden wissen, daß sie folglich auch nicht im Stande sind, die Wahl ihrer Kirchenstücke der Würde ihrer Bestimmung gemäß einzurichten. Anstatt daß die Gemeinde durch ein zweckmäßig eingerichtetes Kirchenchor in einen heiligen Schauer versetzt werden sollte, wird sie nun durch den verfehlten Styl, der niedrig und kraftlos ist, auf Nebengedanken gebracht, die sie von der Andacht abziehen, anstatt die dazu zu entflammrn.<sup>66</sup>

Forkel's argument against the mistaken style of church music echoes those issued against figural and theatrical styles during the debates of the previous century. The inappropriate style might lead the congregation into an inappropriate state of mind and corresponding thoughts, in place of devotion.

The theologian and biblical scholar Wilhelm Martin Leberech de Wette (1780-1849) explains in his *Christliche Sittenlehre* (1819) that virtue and sin could be seen as different attunements of the mind. "Die Tugend ist die harmonische Stimmung des Gemüths [...]. Sünde dagegen ist [...] die von Leidenschaften und Wollust getrübtte Stimmung des Gemüths."<sup>67</sup> If we merge de Wette's definition with Forkel's idea that music could enforce complete attunements of mind, the conclusion must be that music itself could be said to be virtuous or sinful. There seems to be such an idea – that music in itself could be virtuous or sinful – which looms behind the 18<sup>th</sup> century debates on the appropriate style of church music.

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66 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Zweyter Band*, p. 24.

67 Wilhelm Martin Leberech de Wette 1819, *Christliche Sittenlehre, Zweyter Theil: Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Sittenlehre, Erste Hälfte: Geschichte der vorchristlichen und altkatholischen Sittenlehre*, Gedruckt und verlegt bei G. Reimer, Berlin, p. 222.

A similar notion of inappropriate attunement is invoked by The Archbishop of Salzburg Hieronymus Joseph<sup>68</sup> (1732-1812) in his *Hirtenbrief* of the first of September 1782. The Archbishop is probably best known to posterity for his relations with the Mozart family, being the patron and employer of Wolfgang Amadeus as well as his father Leopold. In the mentioned *Hirtenbrief* he writes that “[die] weiche, üppige Kirchenmusik stimmt das Herz nur zu sinnlichen, wollüstigen Gefühlen und man geht ihr zu Gefallen, wie man einer Theatermusik zu Gefallen geht.”<sup>69</sup> True church music should in contrast, the Archbishop contends, serve the edification of public devotion.

Discussions about the true and false in the music of the church were not restricted to German language Europe. A similar debate was raging in 18<sup>th</sup> century England, as shown by William Weber in his study on the English discourse on “Ancient Music”, and the debates on the proper church music associated with it.<sup>70</sup> The English debate was likewise centered on the opposition between the church and the theatre. The critique of operatic or theatrical styles was often accompanied with accusations of Italian frivolity and popish idolatry. Although the Catholic Archbishop Hieronymus Joseph for obvious reasons did not find it expedient to evoke the fear of Italianate popishness, his antagonistic model setting theatre against the church mirrors the basic outline of the Anglican and Lutheran discourse. The idea rests on the presumption that different kinds of music tune the listener to different states of mind. Introducing theatrical music, designed for putting listeners into a sensual and lustful frame of mind, into the service of the church will bring the congregation of the church down to the level of the theatre and thus unreceptive to the word of God. Only the true holy music is able to tune the congregation to true devotion.

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68 His full title being Hieronymus Joseph Franz de Paula Graf Colloredo von Wallsee und Melz.

69 Hieronymus Joseph 1782, *Hirtenbrief auf die am 1ten Herbstm. dieses 1782ten Jahrs, nach zurückgelegtem zwölften Jahrhundert eintretende Jubelfeyer Salzburgs*, gedruckt bey Joh. Thom. Edl. von Trattnern, Wien, p. 65.

70 Weber gives much focus to a publication by the clergyman Arthur Bedford called *Great Abuse of Musick* (1711), which, as Weber contends, “continued to have a strong influence throughout the eighteenth century.” The book was a defense of the Elizabethan English musical tradition represented by composers like Thomas Tallis and William Byrd, while it delivered a harsh critique of the new music, and in particular Italian opera, which at the time had just made its appearance on the London musical scene. William Weber 1992, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 47-56.



## Instrumental music and aesthetic contemplation as devotion

The arguably most well-known study tracing the impact of the religious notion of devotion on ideas of music reception in the years around 1800 is Carl Dahlhaus's *Die Idee der absoluten Musik*. The chapter on "Ästhetische Kontemplation als Andacht" begins with a passage from Forkel's Bach biography (1802), where Forkel states that some of Bach's music requires that we speak of them in a kind of holy worship.<sup>71</sup> Dahlhaus suggests that Forkel might have received the inspiration, to associate musical creations with holy worship, from the writings of Herder or the poets and novelists Johann Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853) and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder (1773-1798). I will not interpret Forkel's statement about Bach here, but rather compare the notion of attunement of mind expressed in his music history with the romantic idea of devotional listening.

The kind of musical devotion expressed in the texts of Herder, Tieck and Wackenroder is based on the premise that the listener is the agent. When Herder, in Dahlhaus's interpretation, locates the condition of an absolute music (i.e. without any specific function or sung text), not in the music itself, but in the mind (*Bewußtseinsverfassung*) of the listener, it is evident that this is something that has to be settled prior to the sounding music. It proceeds from the idea that one should listen *with* devotion (*mit 'Andacht' zu hören*) in the sense that one should *bring* a feeling of devotion (*ein Gefühl der 'Andacht' entgegenbringen*) to the music.<sup>72</sup>

When compared to Forkel's account of devotional attunement, the romantic notion of devotional listening represents an inversion of the causal chain. Music, which in Forkel's account was the means for arousing and strengthening devotion, is according to Dahlhaus's romantics the object of the musical devotion. Devotion, which Forkel regards as the result of the musical cause, is according to the romantics the means that the listener is required to bring with him into the concert hall, in preparation for the worship *of* music. The romantic notion of devotional contemplation therefore refers to an attitude of listening, i.e. a way of approaching the music. According to Forkel's notion of devotional attunement, music, not the listener, is placed in the position of the active agent. "Die heilige Musik [...] versetzt das Gemüth in diejenige Stimmung, die es vorzüglich zu einem fruchtbaren Boden für die Religionslehren macht, und unterhält es endlich darin."<sup>73</sup> The

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71 Carl Dahlhaus 1978, *Die Idee der absoluten Musik*, Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel, p. 81.

72 Ibid., p. 83.

73 Johann Nikolaus Forkel 1801, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik, Zweyter Band*, p. 13.

means through which the music attunes the mind of the audience is not the keen attentiveness (*der angespannten Aufmerksamkeit*) so strenuously maintained by the protagonist in Wackenroder's novel *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1797) while listening to the music "mit eben der Andacht zu, als wenn er in der Kirche wäre."<sup>74</sup> The audience is rather transported into devotion through the physiological mechanism of sympathetic vibration, the elastic parts of their bodies resonating to the vibrations in the air, progressing according to a pattern set up by the principles of the holy style.

## Summary

The main purpose of the introduction chapter in the second volume of Forkel's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* is to provide an argument for the merits of artistic church music. I have argued that Forkel's notion of musical attunement should be understood in this context. This notion forms an integral part of an argument delivered as a response to the challenge from those whom he in an earlier text had called "Feinden der Kirchenmusik und Kirchenmusiker". Although these enemies are neither mentioned by name nor their objections directly addressed in the text, their presence could nonetheless be inferred from the strategies applied by Forkel in his argument for the merits of artistic music.

Forkel's defense of artistic music follows an established path – known since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century – in that it merges an expressionist aesthetic with a traditional Lutheran theology of music: music, as the language of the heart could convey a heightened degree of receptiveness to the holy word by arousing the appropriate passions. However, his introduction of the mechanism of attunement of the soul through sympathetic resonance seems to be novel in this context.

Among the objections raised against artistic music one finds the claim that it is divisive, that it separates performers from audience, and prevents the latter from participating in the glorification of God. It is to counter such an objection that Forkel posits the mechanism of musical attunement. The notion of tuning is based on an acoustical conception of air and the human body. Music is

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74 Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder quoted in, Carl Dahlhaus 1978, *Die Idee der absoluten Musik*, p. 84.

conceptualized as an art of transforming air, which, in virtue of being the immersive medium where humans live their lives, makes it possible to connect the whole assembly present in sonic space through a common attunement. The congregation does not need to partake in the singing or reciting of the holy words in order to be edified or prepared for worship. It is sufficient that they attend to the music, which accomplishes the task all by itself in virtue of being, to lend Motz's expression, a "God-pleasing noise",<sup>75</sup> as glorious and edifying as the holy word itself.

A second objection against artistic music, which had resounded throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, was that musicians are god-less people and by giving them a leading role in the church service, one devalues the holy worship. Forkel does not directly answer this objection, but his focus on musical expression and the holy style, which reside in the sounds (conceived as movements in air), makes the hearts and minds of the musicians a lesser issue. Musicians are rather viewed as mediums lending their hands and singing voices to the task of transforming the music on paper to movements in the air.

The mode of church music reception which Forkel advocates could be described as (mere) listening in the sense that he favors (bodily) passive reception over congregational participation. Whereas he in the introduction to the first volume had emphasized the development of the perceptual faculties of man in accounting for the evolution of music, he is now more inclined to turn the perspective around and focus on the power of music to enforce its effects on a more or less passive assembly of listeners.

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75 Joseph Herl 2004, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism*, p. 121.

## Chapter 4

### Arnold Schering: From listening to sound

This chapter will focus on two articles by Arnold Schering published in the *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters* in the years 1922 and 1928: "Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter" (1922, from now on "Musikhören") and "Historische und nationale Klangstile" (1928, from now on "Klangstile").<sup>1</sup> Both texts could be described as theoretical explorations, with the purpose of trying out new analytical concepts to account for macro-level developments in music history from the medieval age to the present. Both texts display an influence from art history, which – through the efforts of writers like Alois Riegl, Heinrich Wölfflin and Wilhelm Worringer – had developed methodologies for connecting formal analysis of art works to cultural superstructures. Schering was not alone among Weimar era musicologists in attempting to adapt methodologies derived from art history to the study of music.<sup>2</sup>

The overarching aim of this chapter will be to trace the transformation in Schering's music historical outlook in the six-year span separating the two articles. I will demonstrate that "Musikhören" applies a historiographical model based on a traditional twopartite division of music history with the watershed situated around the year 1500. Nonetheless, the framework within which this music historical schism is interpreted is novel. Schering reinterprets the conventional notion of

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1 Arnold Schering 1922, "Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter", in Rudolf Schwartz (ed.), *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters, Achtundzwanzigster Jahrgang, Zweiter Teil: Festgabe zum Siebzigsten Geburtstage Max Friedlaenders*, Verlag von C. F. Peters, Leipzig, pp. 31-43.; Arnold Schering 1928, "Historische und nationale Klangstile", in Rudolf Schwartz (ed.), *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters für 1927*, Verlag von C. F. Peters, Leipzig, pp. 31-43.

2 Wolfgang Dömling 1975, "Über den Einfluss Kunstwissenschaftlicher Theorien auf die Musikhistorie" in Dagmar Droysen (ed.), *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz 1974*, Verlag Merseburger, Berlin, pp. 7-45.

a music-historical schism between the medieval and the modern with the help of the concept of artistic volition (*Kunstwollen*), derived from art history.

In “Klangstile” the dualist model of music history is discarded in favor of a circular one. I will advance the thesis that the application of the circular model is connected with a reevaluation of earlier established hierarchies of sound. I will read Schering’s investigation of “sound styles” (*Klangstile*) into the context of the emerging early music movement in Germany in the 1920s. Schering’s position is similar to that of his colleague Wilibald Gurlitt. Gurlitt’s call for a fundamental transvaluation of all sonic values could also stand as slogan for Schering’s historiography of sound. The arguments I will advance are, firstly, that a hierarchy of sound and sonic values manifests itself in 19<sup>th</sup> century historiography of ancient music, and secondly, that the calls for a sonic revolution should be interpreted in relation to a contemporaneous reevaluation of the heritage of classical antiquity.

## Biography

Arnold Schering (1877-1941) was what we today would call an early music scholar. He made important contributions to the field of Bach studies, as well as playing a major role in the rediscovery of Antonio Vivaldi and the work of several German pre-Bach’ian composers.<sup>3</sup> He also showed scholarly interest in aesthetical questions as well as in the theory and methodology of musicology. After holding positions at the universities of Leipzig and Halle, he moved to Berlin in 1928 where he continued to hold a chair in musicology until his death. He held editorial posts in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (1903–5) and the *Bach-Jahrbuch* (1904–39). During the 1930s he published extensively on the music of Beethoven, at which point he also became deeply involved in the National Socialist Party. His affiliation with NSDAP manifested itself in his effort to reorganize various musicological institutions and organizations according to principles set by the party.<sup>4</sup> His writings from this time also assumed a more nationalistic tone. The two texts under investigation

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3 Edith B. Schnapper 1980, “Schering, Arnold“, in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians*, Vol. 16, Macmillan Publishers Limited, London, pp. 632-633.

4 Pamela M. Potter 1998, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the end of Hitler’s Reich*, Yale University Press, New Haven, pp. 66-68.

were published when Schering was in his mid-forties to around fifty and still holding the professor chair in Halle.

## **”Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter”**

Schering begins “Musikhören” by comparing the tasks of the music historian with those facing the art historian. The analogy should be interpreted as a justification for his introduction, on the subsequent pages, of a terminology derived from art history. He maintains that both the musicologist and the art historian are motivated by a desire to bring the hidden art treasures back to life.<sup>5</sup> There are, as Schering admits, certain limits to the analogy, as the musicologist is faced with some additional problems not shared by the art historian. The primary task of the musicologist consists in assisting the musicians in bringing dead notation back into living sound. The art historian deals with objects endowed with a stable existence in time and space and thus immediately transportable from the artist’s hand to the contemporary beholder. Apart from the natural decay from age, art forms like painting and sculpture are more or less self-preserving. Music, in contrast, needs to be recreated by living musicians who communicate the music to an audience from its basis in the musical notations handed over from the past. The task of the historical musicologist consists in establishing just how and by which means the notations on paper are to be translated into sound. “Im theoretischen Sinne ideal gelöst wäre diese Aufgabe dann, wenn versichert werden könnte: so und nicht anders ist das Tonwerk zur Zeit seiner Entstehung und nach Absicht seines Schöpfers erklingen.”<sup>6</sup> This kind of scholarly self-justification with reference to utility was typical for the Weimar era. Academics took it upon themselves to play a more active part in society, due to a general pressure “to demonstrate their usefulness” and countering accusations of “ivory tower elitism”.<sup>7</sup>

The second problem confronting the musicologist, mentioned by Schering, also emerges from the musicologist’s obligations to musical life. It arises from the experience that the successful

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5 Arnold Schering 1922, “Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter“, p. 41.

6 Ibid.

7 Pamela M. Potter 1998, *Most German of the Arts*, p. 31.

historically accurate recreation of music as a sonic-acoustic object might nonetheless prove insufficient for bringing the music back to life. In other words, it might still fail to give any aesthetic satisfaction to the listener, even in such cases where its composer is acknowledged as a master of his age. The problem pertains in particular to music from distant (temporarily or geographically) musical cultures.

Although the musicologist shares this problem with the historian of art or literature, Schering believes the issue to be especially severe in music, as illustrated by his reference to deviations in the contemporary reception of medieval literature, art and music. “Gegenüber einem Sonett von Petrarca, einem Gemälde Frau Angelicos, einer Plastik Donatellos, die uns noch immer Mengen unmittelbarer Lebenswerte überliefern und ästhetisch aufs stärkste anregen können, hat die Musik ebenderselben Zeit die Kälte und Ausdruckslosigkeit eines Petrefakts.”<sup>8</sup> There is something in the very determination of music as an artistic medium that makes it especially vulnerable to historical changes. The primary aim of “Musikhören” is to deliver an explanation for the reasons behind this seemingly cold and expressionless character of medieval music.

Schering’s concept of expression is derived from a specific art psychological doctrine that was in vogue during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This doctrine proceeds from the idea that aesthetic pleasure stems from the recipient’s identification with the object of contemplation through the psychological mechanism of “aesthetic empathy” (*ästhetische Einfühlung*). Schering’s argument is based on the claim that the empathic identification of the listener is directed towards the expressive content in the music. The problem with medieval music is, according to Schering, that it lacks any recognizable expressive content, and therefore, due to the failure to establish empathic identification, leaves the listener with a feeling of alienation (*Fremdheitsgefühl*).<sup>9</sup> I will return with a more detailed account of the theory of aesthetic empathy below.

Schering’s division of music history centered on the year 1500 rests on the presumption that music, around that date, turned onto a path which led it in the direction of our present music. Music composed before the 16<sup>th</sup> century is consequently seen as constituting another kind of art altogether.

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8 Arnold Schering 1922, “Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter“, p. 42.

9 Ibid.

Wird der Begriff Musik ohne weiteren Nebensinn so gefaßt, wie ihn die letzten drei Jahrhunderte geprägt haben, so würde der Anfang ihres ersten 'klassischen' Zeitalters überhaupt erst um 1500 anzusetzen sein. Erst von diesem Zeitpunkt an treten allmählich die Formen und Techniken hervor, deren auf Jahrhunderte hinauswirkende Allgemeingültigkeit das Beiwort klassisch rechtfertigt und bewirkt, daß wir den lebendigen Herzschlag der Meister noch heute nachzufühlen vermögen.<sup>10</sup>

The living heartbeats of medieval (here defined as pre-1500) music must therefore, according to Schering's division, have silenced sometime during the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the principles of medieval music had been substituted for new ones.

The idea that music history reached a turning point around the year 1500 (or alternatively at a later date during the 16<sup>th</sup> century) is far from novel. Schering's account has some striking similarities with romantic music historiography. The assertions of writers like Hoffmann and Brendel – that music was first realized as a true romantic (Christian) art through the music of Palestrina – resound in Schering's account, although he situates the music historical watershed at a slightly earlier date. According to romantic historiography, modern music was born at the moment when the chains of the ancients were untied – the chains which had prevented medieval music from expressing the "inner world" opened up by the Christian religion. The romantic notion of sounding interiority (discernible by a Christian listener) shares some obvious similarities with Schering's idea that musical expression depends on an empathically attuned listener.

The idea that medieval music was based on principles other than that of late- and post renaissance music was not a romantic invention. Hoffmann's assertion that Palestrina's immediate predecessors were "obsessed with harmonic affectations" and reduced music to a speculative science"<sup>11</sup> is similar to how this music was described in the literature of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. When accounting for the peculiarities of late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century music (contemporaneous with the theoretician Heinrich Glarean), John Hawkins asserts that:

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10 Arnold Schering 1922, "Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter", pp. 41-42.

11 James Garratt 2000, "Prophets Looking Backwards: German Romantic Historicism and the Representation of renaissance Music", p. 178.



It is easy to discover that the music here spoken of was calculated only for learned ears. Afterwards, when the number of those who loved music became greater than of them that understood it, the gratification of the former was consulted, passages were invented, and from these sprang up that kind of modulation called air, which, it is as difficult to define, as to reduce to any rule [...].<sup>12</sup>

The distinction is based on an opposition between feeling and understanding, where medieval music is believed to cling to the latter due to an inability to address the former. A similar opposition is found in Burney's history when he, in relation to the music of Johannes Ockeghem, accuses the 15<sup>th</sup> century composer for catering more for the visual satisfaction of the performer than the sensual pleasures of the listener:

[T]he ears of the congregation seem to have been less consulted than the eye of the performer, who was to solve canonical mysteries, and discover latent beauties of ingenuity and contrivance, about which the hearers were indifferent, provided the general harmony was pleasing. However, the performer's attention was kept on the stretch, and perhaps he gained, in mental amusement, what was wanting in sensual.<sup>13</sup>

Without this refuge into the theory of multiple sources of musical pleasures, the music historian would have been hard pressed to explain why this music was cultivated in the first place and its composers praised in the contemporaneous literature.

A turn in the evaluation of late medieval music occurs in the writings of August Wilhelm Ambros, who, as remarked by Andrew Kirkman, "was the first to ascribe to the music of Josquin Desprez and even of Guillaume Dufay a profoundly emotional affective power."<sup>14</sup> Music historians

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12 Sir John Hawkins 1875, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music Vol. 1*, p. 325.

13 Charles Burney 1935, *A General History of Music*, p. 731.

14 Andrew Kirkman 2000, "'Under Such Heavy Chains': The Discovery and Evaluation of Late Medieval Music before Ambros", p. 90.

prior to Ambros had consistently faulted medieval music for failing to address the appropriate organ of reception, variously defined as the ear or the heart.<sup>15</sup>

## Artistic volition

Schering rejects Ambros's assertion that late medieval music carries emotional contents. Instead he holds on to the old thesis that medieval music does not address the heart, now reformulated as a failure to meet the expectations of the empathically attuned listener. However, in rejecting what he calls the old materialistic theory, he introduces a new explanatory device to account for the phenomenon.

Wir lassen die alte materialistische Theorie beiseite, nach der auch die Musik erst eine Epoche handwerksmäßiger Vorbildung hätte durchlaufen müssen, ehe sie ihr Material zur Darstellung wahrhafter, würdiger, sogenannter klassischer Kunstideen gefügig gemacht, und halten an der Überzeugung fest, daß die künstlerischen Hervorbringen eines Zeitalters jedesmal ganz seinem Kunstwollen entsprochen haben.<sup>16</sup>

Schering's discarding of "the old materialistic theory" should be taken as a critique of the tradition of interpreting the middle ages as a time of musical immaturity. His description of the materialist thesis fits the above presented tradition of treating pre-1500 music as the outcome of experiments in a material which was yet to be properly mastered, and whose artistic potential was not correctly understood. Hoffmann's claim, quoted above, that the music prior to Palestrina was a speculative science or Burney's assertion that "[in] music different from all other arts, learning and labour seem to have preceded taste and invention",<sup>17</sup> both contain "materialist" presumptions in the sense conveyed in Schering's definition. Both assertions proceed from the basic assumption that music of

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15 See also, Lawrence F. Bernstein 2006, "'Singende Seele' or 'unsingbar'? Forkel, Ambros, and the Forces behind the Ockeghem Reception during the Late 18th and 19th Centuries", pp. 3-61.

16 Arnold Schering 1922, "Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter", p. 43.

17 Charles Burney 1935, *A General History of Music*, p. 731.

the medieval age had not yet found its proper self, and was therefore delivered to experiments with intellectually conceived modes of musical structuring.

Schering's introduction of the notion of "artistic volition" (*Kunstwollen*) signals a substitution of the evolutionary perspective with a revolutionary one. It suggests that one should proceed from the assumption that medieval music was perfectly capable of satisfying the aesthetic needs of the medieval listener. Rather than interpreting the idiosyncrasies of medieval music as failed attempts at modern (expressional) music, one should suppose that they are motivated in the artistic volition of the age.

The term *Kunstwollen* was coined by the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905). Riegl is regularly counted among the main contributors to the founding of the modern academic discipline of art history (*Kunstwissenschaft*) and is considered a "pioneer of modern formal analysis, and spokesperson for a relativistic theory of artistic value."<sup>18</sup> Jas Elsner describes Riegl's project as a "grand attempt to tie formal empiricism and its positivistic entailments to a much bigger, general [...] picture of the development of forms [...], culminating finally in the development of cultures and cultural change [...]."<sup>19</sup> The notion of artistic volition is given a central role as a mediator between individual artistic products and the culture at large. In the book that is arguably his magnum opus, *Die Spättrömische Kunst-Industrie* (1901), Riegl explains that the artistic volition should be seen as a manifestation of the will in general, which finds its ultimate motivation in the worldview of the community.

Alles Wollen des Menschen ist auf die befriedigende Gestaltung seines Verhältnisses zu der Welt (im umfassendsten Sinn des Wortes, inner- und außerhalb des Menschen) gerichtet. Das bildende Kunstwollen regelt das Verhältnis des Menschen zur sinnlich wahrnehmbare Erscheinung der Dinge: es gelangt darin die Art und Weise zum Ausdruck, wie der Mensch jeweilig die Dinge gestaltet oder gefärbt sehen will (ähnlich wie im poetischen Kunstwollen die Art und Weise wie er die Dinge anschaulich vorgestellt haben will). Der Mensch ist aber nicht allein ein mit Sinnen aufnehmendes

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18 Margaret Olin 1998, "Riegl, Alois", in Michael Kelly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, Volume 4*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 166.

19 Jas Elsner 2006, "From Empirical Evidence to the Big Picture: Some Reflections on Riegl's Concept of Kunstwollen", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 742-743.

(passives), sondern auch ein begehrendes (aktives) Wesen, das daher die Welt so ausdeuten will, wie sie sich seinem (nach Volk, Ort und Zeit wechselnden) Begehren am offensten und willfähigsten erweist. Der Charakter dieses Wollens ist beschlossen in demjenigen was wir die jeweilige Weltanschauung (abermals im weitesten Sinne des Wortes) nennen: in Religion, Philosophie, Wissenschaft, auch Staat und Recht, - wobei in der Regel eine der genannten Ausdrucksformen über alle anderen zu überwiegen pflegt.<sup>20</sup>

The idea is that the artistic production of an age or culture is intimately connected with its religious and scientific ideas as well as its political organization. The overarching structure that holds all these different spheres together is what Riegl refers to as worldview (*Weltanschauung*). The worldview springs from a religious-metaphysical basis and determines the ways in which the world is perceived and therefore the possible way on which it could be acted upon. The idea opens up new vistas for art historiography. Given that the perceptual world of the past is imprinted in the formal properties of art work, and that the art historian is in possession of methods for deriving this perceptual data through formal analysis, art history might provide a privileged gateway to past cultures. The great merit of Riegl's work was thus, as Michael Gubser remarks, that it provided "models for linking the analysis of specific artworks with a history of perception".<sup>21</sup>

The introduction to Riegl's breakthrough work *Stilfragen* (1893) begins with an attack on what he calls the materialist historiography of art, which, as he claims, has dominated the discipline for the previous three decades.<sup>22</sup> He identifies the source of his art historical materialism in the writings of the German architect and art historian Gottfried Semper (1803-1879). Riegl distinguishes between Semper and his followers (*die Semperianer*). He concedes that Semper should be praised for introducing a healthy and necessary focus on the material influence in art history. His followers on the other hand, who he also describes as "die extreme Partei der

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20 Alois Riegl 1901, *Die Spätromische Kunst-Industrie: Nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn, Im Zusammenhange mit der Gesamtentwicklung der Bildenden Künste bei den Mittelmeervölkern*, Druck und Verlag der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, Wien, p. 215.

21 Michael Gubser 2005, "Time and History in Alois Riegl's Theory of Perception", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 66, No. 3, p. 451.

22 Alois Riegl 1893, *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik*, Verlag von Georg Siemens, Berlin, p. vi.

Kunstmaterialisten,” take materialism too far, sacrificing the spiritual (volitional) element in order to reduce artistic culture to the singular factor of technique. “Dies geschah gewiss nicht im Geiste Gottfried Sempers, der wohl der Letzte gewesen wäre, der an Stelle des frei schöpferischen Kunstwollens einen wesentlich mechanisch-materiellen Nachahmungstrieb hätte gesetzt wissen wollen.”<sup>23</sup> The main charge directed towards art historical materialism is that it proceeds from a more or less taken for granted assumption that beauty is universal. Theories of artistic volition represent a challenge to aesthetic universalism as they suggest that artistic production has its ultimate basis in culturally variable and historically malleable worldviews. Artistic volition comes into view as an art historical problem at the moment when it is no longer assumed to be universally held. The challenge it raises to art history is based on the conviction that each art work contains within itself principles of its own generation, and thus also the standards of its evaluation, which it is the art historian’s task to unearth.

One of Riegl’s most notable followers, Wilhelm Worringer, emphasizes how the notion of artistic volition can function as a healthy antidote to what he sees as a naive and commonly held supposition that all art shares in a universally held urge towards imitative naturalism.

Man wird im allgemeinen nicht verstehen, warum dem Begriff Kunstwollen eine so ausschliessliche Bedeutung gegeben wird, weil man von der naiven festeingewurzelten Voraussetzung ausgeht, dass das Kunstwollen, d. h. der zweckbewusste Trieb, der der Entstehung des Kunstwerkes vorangeht, zu allen Zeiten mit Vorbehalt gewisser Variationen, die man stilistische Eigentümlichkeiten nennt, derselbe gewesen sei und, soweit die bildenden Künste in Betracht kommen, die Annäherung an das Naturvorbild zum Ziel gehabt habe.<sup>24</sup>

Worringer maintains that modern man will approach artistic objects with expectations intrinsic to the attitude of aesthetic empathy, which is presumed to constitute a universal basis for artistic culture. It is first when this presumption can no longer be defended that the art historian is forced to

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23 Alois Riegl 1893, *Stilfragen*, p. vii.

24 Wilhelm Worringer 1911, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung: ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie. Dritte, um einen Anhang vermehrte Auflage*, P. Piper & Co GmbH. Verlag, München, p. 10.

address the issue of artistic volition. The volitional approach facilitates an interpretation of the strange and alien in “primitive art”, not as unsuccessful attempts at beauty impeded by the inability of the artist to successfully fashion the artistic materials, but rather as the result of culturally specific psychological motives. One must start from the presumption, as Worringer writes, that:

*Jeder Stil stellte für die Menschheit, die ihn aus ihren psychischen Bedürfnissen heraus schuf, die höchste Beglückung dar. Das muss zum obersten Glaubenssatz aller objektiven kunstgeschichtlichen Betrachtung werden. Was von unserem Standpunkt aus als grösste Verzerrung erscheint, muss für den jeweiligen Produzenten die höchste Schönheit und die Erfüllung seines Kunstwollens gewesen sein.*<sup>25</sup>

The notion of artistic volition is built on a relativist conception of aesthetic judgments, which opens up the possibility of an art history from the perspective of the recipient. The history of listening, as Schering presents it in “Musikhören”, proceeds from the analogous assumption that historical styles are fashioned in such a way as to give the maximum amount of satisfaction to their contemporaneous listeners. The focus is turned away from the ability of the composer, towards the historical nature of listening and musical judgment.

## **Abstraction and empathy**

The notion of artistic volition spawned a number of different analytical concepts during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is characteristic for the most notable among them – like Riegl’s distinction between haptic and optic, and Heinrich Wölfflin’s (1864-1945) opposition of linear and painterly – that they assume the form of binary oppositions. Another characteristic of the mentioned dualisms of Riegl and Wölfflin is that they are directly derived from stylistic traits in the visual arts, and could therefore not be immediately adapted to other aesthetic disciplines. Although Wölfflin for instance insisted that “the linear” and “the painterly” – concepts originally derived from the analysis

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25 Wilhelm Worringer 1911, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, pp. 14-15.

of renaissance and baroque paintings – could be applied to the study of architecture,<sup>26</sup> it would have required quite an amount of imaginative conversion to fashion these visually oriented concepts into ones serviceable to the musicologist.

The theory of artistic volition which Schering adapts in “Musikhören” is one that proceeds from a pair of concepts not derived from the analysis of visual arts. The theory was introduced in the book *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* in which the author, the German art historian Wilhelm Worringer (1881-1965), as Schering writes, raised the awareness:

daß wir zeitlich fernen Kunstperioden niemals gerecht werden können, wenn wir ihnen gegenüber nur jene psychische Haltung zur Schau tragen, die, erst ein Ergebnis späterer Entwicklungsprozesse, als Einfühlungsbedürfnis bezeichnet wird. Vielmehr muß mit einem zweiten, und zwar entgegengesetzten Begriff gerechnet werden, den Worringer Abstraktionsdrang nennt.<sup>27</sup>

*Abstraktion und Einfühlung* was Worringer’s doctoral thesis, first published in 1908. The book could be read as a historical investigation into the psychology of style (as indicated by its subtitle), or as an aesthetic manifesto advocating the discarding of the ideal of pictorial naturalism in favor of a (re)turn to artistic abstraction. The last mentioned reading would dominate the reception of the book. Its impact was greatest among practicing artists, as it seemed to provide a theoretical justification for abstract (non-naturalistic) art. The book was published right at the onset of the modernist revolution in painting, succeeding Pablo Picasso’s groundbreaking *Les Femmes d’Alger* by one year. Worringer’s book succeeded, as Mary Gluck remarks, “in giving powerful expression to the two central preoccupations of early-twentieth-century modernism: the impulse to abstraction and the fascination with the primitive.”<sup>28</sup> It was less well received among professional art historians, who “found his writings too speculative for their needs.”<sup>29</sup> “Abstraction” and “empathy” diverge from other art historical concepts current around the same time, in that they refer

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26 Michael Podro 1982, *The Critical Historians of Art*, Yale University Press, New Haven, pp. 101-102.

27 Arnold Schering 1922, “Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter“, p. 43.

28 Mary Gluck 2000, “Interpreting Primitivism, Mass Culture and Modernism: The Making of Wilhelm Worringer’s *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*“, *New German Critique*, No. 80, p. 154.

29 Ibid., p. 155 n16.

to modes of aesthetic perception rather than to identifiable stylistic traits in art works. In order for them to function as analytical tools, they needed to be aligned with stylistic elements distinguishable through analysis. While the speculative nature of Worringer's theory made it unattractive to art historians, its openness – in virtue of being detached from formal traits of the visual arts – made it easier to adapt to other disciplines.

Worringer proceeds from the assumption that the impulse towards imitation is the common motivational source of all visual arts. However, he is careful to point out that the principle of imitation should be distinguished from that of pictorial naturalism, which merely refers to a subgroup of imitation. The impulse to imitate is always mediated through an artistic volition, which is defined by either the urge to abstract or alternatively the urge towards empathic identification. The principle through which artistic objects facilitate the empathic identification is not through mere visual illusionism, but rather through what Worringer describes as an approximation towards the living-organic.<sup>30</sup>

Die psychische Voraussetzung war also nicht die spielerische banale Freude an der Uebereinstimmung der künstlerischen Darstellung mit dem Objekt derselben, sondern das Bedürfnis, Beglückung zu erfahren durch die geheimnisvolle Macht organischer Form, in der man seinen eigenen Organismus gesteigert genießen konnte. Kunst war eben objektivierter Selbstgenuss.<sup>31</sup>

At the time Worringer was writing his thesis, the theory of aesthetic empathy enjoyed widespread acceptance as a psychological explanation for art appreciation. Aesthetic empathy emerges in the wake of the demise of the classic theory of beauty, and the corresponding turn from beauty “towards art and *aesthetic experience*.”<sup>32</sup> The concept is above all associated with the German philosopher Theodor Lipps (1851-1914), whose writings provided the model for Worringer's definition of empathy. Lipps's concept of empathy refers, as Helen Bridge writes, “to a process by

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30 Wilhelm Worringer 1911, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, p. 30.

31 Ibid., p. 31.

32 Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz 1972, “The Great Theory of Beauty and Its Decline”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 31, No. 2, p. 177.



which we endow the object of our vision – whether human or non-human – with life, or with a soul.”<sup>33</sup> The theory of aesthetic empathy does not originate with Lipps, and it has been shown to emerge from an earlier notion of “sympathy”.<sup>34</sup> Around the turn of the century the concept of empathy (*Einfühlung*) had attained a dominant role within aesthetic theory. “Das Ziel der folgenden Ausführungen ist,” Worringer writes in the first chapter of *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, “nachzuweisen, dass die Annahme, dieser Einfühlungsprozess sei zu allen Zeiten und allerorten die Voraussetzung künstlerischen Schaffens gewesen, nicht aufrecht erhalten werden kann.”<sup>35</sup> Rigel’s notion of artistic volition is the conceptual tool that provides Worringer with the means for reducing the field of application for aesthetic empathy.

“Aesthetic abstraction” makes up the counter pole to empathy in Worringer’s theory. “Abstraction” refers to the process of removing the contingent part of a phenomenon so as to let it appear in its archetypical form, i.e. the features necessary for a successful identification of the depicted object as member of a specific class of objects. The term might also denote the end product of the process of abstraction, e.g. an abstract object/idea removed from the contingency of individual phenomena (akin to the Platonic/Aristotelian *eidos*). 19<sup>th</sup> century theories of artistic abstraction grew out of the study of ornamental design, and the term was from the beginning presented in opposition to traditional representational high art. It was through this association with ornamental design that the designation “abstraction” came to be used in connection with non-representational (or at least schematized, as in cubism) high art.<sup>36</sup> Rather than founding the two artistic volitions on religious/metaphysical worldviews, Worringer refers them back to what he calls fundamental psychic attitudes towards the cosmos.<sup>37</sup> There are two options available, each corresponding to one of the two artistic volitions, empathy and abstraction. The one is characterized by an affirmative trust in the phenomena of the world, the other by a deep-seated mistrust.

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33 Helen Bridge 2011, “Empathy theory and Heinrich Wölfflin: A reconsideration”, *Journal of European Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1, p. 3.

34 Gustav Jahoda 2005, “Theodor Lipps and the Shift from ‘Sympathy’ to ‘Empathy’”, *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 151-163.

35 Wilhelm Worringer 1911, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, p. 7.

36 David Morgan 1992, “The Idea of Abstraction in German Theories of the Ornament from Kant to Kandinsky”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 50, No. 3, p. 231.

37 Wilhelm Worringer 1911, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, pp. 16-17.

Während der Einfühlungsdrang ein glückliches pantheistisches Vertraulichkeitsverhältnis zwischen dem Menschen und den Aussenwelterscheinungen zur Bedingung hat, ist der Abstraktionsdrang die Folge einer grossen inneren Beunruhigung des Menschen durch die Erscheinungen der Aussenwelt und korrespondiert in religiöser Beziehung mit einer stark transzendentalen Färbung aller Vorstellungen. Diesen Zustand möchten wir eine ungeheure geistige Raumscheu nennen.<sup>38</sup>

Worringer presents this “immense fear of space” as a primitive instinct. It is analogous to the pathological fear of open spaces (agoraphobia), which occasionally surfaces in modern man from its arcane sources in the subconscious soul. However, he emphasizes that the kind of agoraphobia manifested in aesthetic abstraction does not have its source in an instinctive shielding from predators. It is rather a kind of intellectual agoraphobia, motivated in a metaphysical dread. This metaphysical dread has its origin in the unstable nature of the organic world – characterized by its constant changes, growths and declines. The artistic volition of abstraction is thus motivated by an urge to hold on to the phenomena and shield them from the caprice of the organic world. The depicted phenomena are fixed by giving them a general schematized form and removing all traits of spatial depth. He finds this strategy imprinted in the art production of “the civilized peoples of the East”.

*Ihr stärkster Drang war, das Objekt der Aussenwelt gleichsam aus dem Naturzusammenhang, aus dem unendlichen Wechselspiel des Seins herauszureissen, es von allem, was Lebensabhängigkeit, d. i. Willkür an ihm war, zu reinigen, es notwendig und unverrückbar zu machen, es seinem absoluten Werte zu nähern. Wo ihnen das gelang, da empfanden sie jene Beglückung und Befriedigung, die uns die Schönheit der organisch-lebensvollen Form gewährt, ja sie kannten keine andere Schönheit und so dürfen wir es ihre Schönheit nennen.*<sup>39</sup>

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38 Ibid., p. 17.

39 Ibid., pp. 18-19.

Aesthetic abstraction has its source in the desire to remove the objects of the world out of the flux of nature by removing all traces of space – conceived as the dimension of the contingent and unstable – instead letting the objects rest on a flat two-dimensional surface. The dread of space is a dread of the third dimension, of depth, symbolizing the immense, possibly eternal magnitude of the universe and the fragility of man being thrown into it. Worringer's idea of abstraction has much in common with Schopenhauer's idea of aesthetic contemplation as a retreat from appearances to a stable reality transcending appearances conceived as "Platonic Ideas [...] outside the sphere of knowledge available to us in our normal world of experience."<sup>40</sup>

### **Schering's appropriation of Worringer's terminology**

In the following I will argue that Schering bases his adaption of Worringer's dichotomy on an analogy between the visual arts and music. The bridging of the two art forms is done by introducing a depth dimension in music mediated through the listener. Schering argues that medieval listening progressed in a two-dimensional horizontal fashion. The horizontal mode of listening was gradually supplemented by a vertical mode of listening, which made its first humble appearance during the late middle ages. The resulting three-dimensional listening would come to its own with the emergence of a real sound-space in the music of the late renaissance.<sup>41</sup> It is not immediately evident how Schering's theory of sound-space and the two modes of listening should be understood. In the following I will focus on their role in bridging the two art forms, music and painting, so as to be able to adapt the notion of pictorial depth, which plays a decisive role in Worringer's theory, to the field of music. Rather than denoting specific psychological processes, the horizontal/vertical opposition must be understood as ways of "viewing" or conceptualizing the musical object. From the horizontal viewpoint music appears as a progression of rhythmic patterns – analogous to the geometrical styles in "primitive" handcrafted objects (like rugs and pottery). When supplementing this horizontal viewpoint with a vertical one, the music attains qualities akin to those of post-medieval painting where objects are scattered in a pictorial space held together by its convergence towards a vanishing point (i.e. a tonal center of reference). "Man stand plötzlich vor einer zuvor

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40 Philip Alperson 1981, "Schopenhauer and Musical Revelation", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 40, No. 2, p. 156.

41 Arnold Schering 1922, "Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter", p. 52.

wohl kaum bewußt erfaßten Tiefenwirkung der Musik, vor dem Problem des gleichzeitigen Horizontal- und Vertikalhörens, das unbedingt zu einer *Tonraum*-Vorstellung führen mußte.“<sup>42</sup> The use of the spatial metaphor of listening makes it possible for Schering to align the developments in the history of renaissance music with the contemporaneous evolution of spatial illusionism in the visual arts.

Schering buttresses his claim for the horizontal nature of medieval listening with several circumstantial evidences, found in literary sources as well as in the musical score. He finds the horizontal thesis strengthened by the fact that the medieval world seemed to lack a developed vocabulary for describing vertical sound impressions, apart from “ganz allgemeine Ausdrücke wie euphonia, dulcis, amoenus, iucundus, die sich alle auf das Angenehme des Klanges beziehen [...]“.<sup>43</sup> Neither does he find any evidence indicating the existence of anything akin to a theory of harmonic function in the musical literature of the time. However, Schering’s main arguments are made with reference to compositional strategies and formal traits in the music. He mentions the *cantus firmus* (i.e. a “fixed melody” providing the structural basis for a polyphonic composition) and the canon as compositional strategies that proceed from a predominantly linear conception of music. Furthermore, in the motet of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with its independently conceived melodic lines combined in different metres and with different texts, he finds a particularly purebred manifestation of this horizontal orientation. “Denn wenn, wie hier, das Absingen von zwei oder gar drei Liedern verschiedenen Metrums mit gesonderten Texten auf stützende instrumentale Baßphrasen zum Prinzip erhoben ist, so muß auch ein entsprechendes Hörprinzip dafür gegolten haben.“<sup>44</sup>

This method of deducing the listener from the supposed requirements placed upon him by the music is a dominating strategy in Schering’s investigation of the history of listening.<sup>45</sup> He proceeds in a similar fashion when accounting for the gradual emergence of vertical listening. Schering associates the new multidimensional mode of listening with stylistic changes in the music during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and in particular the increasing frequency of thirds and progressions of triadic chords. According to Schering the orientation towards triadic harmony leads the attention of the

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42 Ibid., pp. 50-51.

43 Ibid., p. 52.

44 Ibid.

45 Rob C. Wegman rightfully remarks that such strategies of deducing the listener from the musical score “may be vulnerable to the charge that they amount to no more than hidden projections of a priori analytical assumptions.” Rob C. Wegman 1998, “‘Das Musikalische Hören’ in the Middle Ages and Renaissance”, p. 441.

listener, almost by force, towards the upper voice.<sup>46</sup> The consequence is that the other voices melt together to form an environment held together by a tonal center of reference analogous to the vanishing point in renaissance painting. The music of the late renaissance could thus, if one is willing to accept Schering's analogy, be said to contain the same spatial affirmation as is found in contemporaneous paintings.

## Neo-abstraction

There is an interesting twist to Worringer's art history in that the naturalistic affirmation of pictorial depth corresponds to spiritual superficiality, and conversely, the denial of pictorial depth coincides with spiritual profundity. The empathic world-affirming naturalism in art, which emerges from a happy pantheistic confidence in a supposedly stable relation between man and the phenomena of the world,<sup>47</sup> corresponds, in the religious realm, to what Worringer describes as a naïve anthropomorphic pantheism or polytheism.<sup>48</sup> The religions of classical antiquity fit this description in a paradigmatic way. The description – with its emphasis on polytheism and superficial spirituality – also evokes some of the traditional accusations leveled against Catholicism by Protestant writers. There is no openly stated anti-Catholicism in Worringer's text. The differentiation between a northern (Protestant) and a southern (Catholic) artistic spirit would however be a feature of his next major work *Formprobleme der Gotik* (1911).<sup>49</sup> Abstraction, on the other hand, corresponds to “einer trübgefärbten, von einem dualistischen Prinzip beherrschten Transzendenzreligion”.<sup>50</sup> “Transcendence” refers to the removal of the deities from nature, and the “dualist principle” manifests itself in metaphysical distinctions between notions like heaven and earth, soul and matter, essence and appearance and so on.

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46 Arnold Schering 1922, “Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter“, pp. 53-54.

47 Wilhelm Worringer 1911, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, p. 17.

48 Ibid., pp. 50-51.

49 One cannot rule out that Worringer's theory might be founded on a similar “primitivist” germanocentrism as expressed in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, when Friedrich Nietzsche writes that a rebirth of the tragic (pre-Socratic) age involves for the German spirit merely a return to its own essence, freed from “das Gängelband einer romanischen Civilisation”. Friedrich Nietzsche 1907, *Die Geburt der Tragödie. Oder: Griechenthum und Pessimismus*, C. G. Naumann Verlag, Leipzig, p. 140.

50 Wilhelm Worringer 1911, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, p. 52.

*Abstraktion und Einfühlung* is, as already mentioned, just as much a programmatic as a historical text. Its message to the reader is that the tides of history are about to turn, and that the West is on the brink of returning to the cultural conditions characteristic of aesthetic abstraction. The way ahead has already been staked out by “the Orientals” (*die orientalischen Kulturvölker*), who have, Worringer asserts, demonstrated that the urge to abstract could be the dominant artistic tendency in highly developed cultures. He does not specify just which nation or people he is referring to by the designation “Oriental”, but his examples often refer to India. That which distinguishes the Orientals from more primitive artistic cultures with a similar basis in aesthetic abstraction is that “[i]hre geistige Raumscheu, ihr Instinkt für die Relativität alles Seienden stand nicht, wie bei den primitiven Völkern, vor dem Erkennen, sondern über dem Erkennen.”<sup>51</sup>

Worringer’s account of the current aesthetic-cultural revolution is guided by an analogy between Oriental wisdom and German philosophy. Immanuel Kant is presented as the harbinger of a worldview leading back to the conditions of aesthetic abstraction. Worringer’s Kant-reading is done through the optics of a Schopenhauerian proto-*Lebensphilosophie*, where the emphasis is on the “existential” consequences of the strict epistemological constraints placed on speculative reason in the Kantian philosophy. The Kantian acknowledgement of the impossibility of grasping “the thing in itself” behind the appearances of the world is taken as a sign that the European mind is catching up with ancient Oriental wisdom. Worringer finds the Kantian fissure between appearance and essence prefigured in the Indian deity Maya, the god of dream and illusion – the greatest illusion being that the self is distinct from the universe.

Vom Hochmut des Wissens herabgeschleudert steht der Mensch nun wieder ebenso verloren und hilflos dem Weltbild gegenüber wie der primitive Mensch, nachdem er erkannt hat, 'dass diese sichtbare Welt, in der wir sind, das Werk der Maja sei, ein hervorgerufener Zauber, ein bestandloser, an sich wesenloser Schein, der optischen Illusion und dem Traume zu vergleichen, ein Schleier, der das menschliche Bewusstsein umfängt, ein Etwas, davon es gleich falsch und gleich wahr ist, zu sagen, dass es sei, als dass es nicht sei'.<sup>52</sup>

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51 Ibid., p. 18.

52 Ibid., p. 20. Inserted citation is reported in Worringer’s text as a quote from Schopenhauer’s *Kritik der Kantischen Philosophie*.

Worringer's point is that the insight contained within the sphere of instinctive behavior among primitive peoples has now been regained by the way of the intellect, through the philosophy of Kant and Schopenhauer. The quoted section is strikingly similar to a passage found in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872), where Nietzsche in a similar fashion hails Kant and Schopenhauer as the harbingers of the demise of "den im Wesen der Logik verborgen liegenden Optimismus, der wiederum der Untergrund unserer Cultur ist."<sup>53</sup>

Schering's medieval man displays some traits corresponding to Worringer's definition of the "Oriental-transcendent" attitude. Most notably, he lacks the egological assertion of the "European-Classical" attitude.

Dem Mittelalter war egozentrische Weltbetrachtung fremd. Es lag nicht in seiner Denkrichtung, das Ich von der Welt abzusondern und zum Maßstab alles Seins und Handelns zu machen, noch viel weniger, es in den Dingen widergespiegelt zu sehen. Das hätte als Vermessenheit gegolten. So stellt der mittelalterliche Künstler, der Musiker, das Tonstück nicht als Teil seines ureigenen Selbst, etwa mit Persönlichkeits- und Charakterwerten belastet, hin, sondern als Leistung des ganzen Menschentyps, dem er angehört.<sup>54</sup>

The medieval composer, due to his lack of the self-asserting attitude of romantic/modern man, was assigned a position in society akin to that of a craftsman. "[S]eine Kunst [rückt] in unmittelbare Nähe des Handwerks. [...] Daher ist nicht 'Schaffen', sondern 'Arbeit' das zutreffende Wort [...].

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53 "Der ungeheuren Tapferkeit und Weisheit Kant's und Schopenhauer's ist der schwerste Sieg gelungen, der Sieg über den im Wesen der Logik verborgen liegenden Optimismus, der wiederum der Untergrund unserer Cultur ist. Wenn dieser an die Erkennbarkeit und Ergründlichkeit aller Welträthsel, gestützt auf die ihm unbedenklichen aeternae veritates, geglaubt und Raum, Zeit und Causalität als gänzlich unbedingte Gesetze von allgemeinsten Gültigkeit behandelt hatte, offenbarte Kant, wie diese eigentlich nur dazu dienten, die bloße Erscheinung, das Werk der Maja, zur einzigen und höchsten Realität zu erheben und sie an die Stelle des innersten und wahren Wesens der Dinge zu setzen und die wirkliche Erkenntnis von diesem dadurch unmöglich zu machen, d. h., nach einem Schopenhauer'schen Ausspruche, den Träumer noch fester einzuschläfern (W. a. W. u. V. I, p. 498). Mit dieser Erkenntnis ist eine Cultur eingeleitet, welche ich als eine tragische zu bezeichnen wage: deren wichtigstes Merkmal ist, dass an die Stelle der Wissenschaft als höchstes Ziel die Weisheit gerückt wird [...]." Friedrich Nietzsche 1907, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, p. 128.

54 Arnold Schering 1922, "Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter", pp. 54-55.

Nichts in dieser Musik deutet in die Ferne, hat romantischen Charakter; alles ist zuständig, dem Augenblick zugewandt.“<sup>55</sup> The sobriety and artistic modesty, which Schering attributes to medieval music, have similarities with the ideals of the aesthetics of New Objectivity, and the corresponding call for utility in musical practice – promoted under the slogan *Gebrauchsmusik*.

Although Schering’s description of medieval man and his art corresponds with artistic ideals current in Weimar Germany, “Musikhören” could not easily be interpreted as an argument for the revival of medieval music, or the relevance of its aesthetic principles, to contemporary society. At one point Schering raises the question if the contemporary listener could alter his attitude, so as to hear medieval music as medieval man did. However, he swiftly dismisses the question by remarking that it is not a problem that could be answered scientifically (i.e. by musicology).<sup>56</sup>

The historiographical framework of “Musikhören” is different from that applied by Worringer in *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*. As mentioned earlier, the popular reception of Worringer’s book among practicing artists and art theoreticians was a consequence of the fact that it seemed to suggest “that the situation of modern man demanded an abstract geometric art.”<sup>57</sup> The prophetic claims advanced by Worringer follows from his choice of historiographical model, which is a circular (or more precisely a dialectical) one. In Schering’s appropriation of Worringer’s theory the latter’s historiographical model is substituted for a conventional dualist one, which has certain similarities with the romantic version of the ancient-modern narrative. The prophetic element is absent from Schering’s appropriation of Worringer’s theory. Abstraction and empathy are used as analytical tools for Schering’s own purposes, divorced from the framework from which they were derived.

Schering seems to perceive musical abstraction as something enforced on the people from above, rather than an urge rising from the people. Its center of propagation was the (Catholic) church, where it served as a means to counter the sensual pleasures of music. This interpretation is reinforced when one takes Schering’s statements about medieval “popular” or “folk” music into consideration. In the lower strata of the population, a primitive form of empathy was already cultivated. “Nur in einem Punkte klingen auch diese getrennten Zeitalter noch harmonisch

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55 Ibid., p. 55.

56 Ibid., p. 43.

57 Karsten Harries quoted in, David Morgan 1996, “The Enchantment of Art: Abstraction and Empathy from German Romanticism to Expressionism”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 57, No. 2, p. 324.



zusammen: in der Schätzung der schlichten, gesungenen Liedmelodie. So wie an ihr, wie wir sahen, das Abstraktionsbedürfnis abprallte, so unverloren bleib ihre aus dem Gemüt quellende Ursprünglichkeit in fernen Jahrhunderten.“<sup>58</sup>

## “Historische und nationale Klangstile”

Attention will now be turned towards a discourse on sound propounded by a group of early music scholars in Weimar Germany. My point of departure will be Arnold Schering’s “Historische und nationale Klangstile” (1928, from now on “Klangstile”), but texts written by associated scholars like Wilibald Gurlitt and Wolfgang Graeser will also inform my investigations. I will interpret “Klangstile” in the context of a 19<sup>th</sup> century discourse on sound. My contention is that Schering’s study of historical and national sound styles could be interpreted as a contribution to the transvaluation of the hierarchies of sound and the whole discourse on sonic values, inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In contrast to “Musikhören” the fundamental concepts in “Klangstile” – the sound styles referred to in the title – are derived from musical analysis, rather than being brought in from a neighboring discipline. Schering posits two fundamental transhistorical sound styles, labeled cleaved sound (*gespaltenen Klänge*) and sound-fusion (*Klangverschmelzung*). Although the sound styles are derived from stylistic traits in the music, each of them is supplied with a corresponding pair of subjective/psychological “sound ideals” (*Klangideale*), which serves to connect the musical work object to the worldview of the culture.

“Klangstile” furthermore discards the dualist model of history applied in “Musikhören”, substituting it with a cyclical conception of history. Music history is now conceived as a sequence of revolutions between two antithetical principles of sound. The cyclical model leads Schering to reorganize the family tree of music historical epochs. In models of linear evolution by accumulation or organic growth, the family relationships between music historical epochs are apprehended as factors of temporal proximity. That is, a music historical epoch is more closely related to its

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58 Arnold Schering 1922, “Über Musikhören und Musikempfinden im Mittelalter“, p. 56.

temporal neighbors than to the more distant epochs. The cyclical model rejects this principle of temporal proximity, substituting it with the ahistorical principle of cyclical recurrence. It proceeds from the thesis that music historical relations are determined by each epoch's position within the cycle of recurrence. Schering derives a revival thesis from his new historiographical model, which, as we shall see below, results in a more affirmative treatment of medieval music. Another interesting feature in "Klangstile" is Schering's alignment of the middle ages with "the Orient".

## The Oriental hypothesis

In his book on *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music* (2002), Daniel Leech-Wilkinson coins the expression "the Oriental hypothesis" with reference to the idea that medieval music calls for an Oriental mode of performance.<sup>59</sup> Leech-Wilkinson traces the origin of the idea back to the 1920s and in particular to the writings of the Spanish scholar Julián Ribera y Tarragó (1858-1934) on the Arabian influence on the music of medieval Spain. German interwar musicology is nevertheless seen as the main source of dissemination for the Oriental hypothesis. Leech-Wilkinson mentions Schering as one of its main propagators, together with Marius Schneider (1903-1982), who in the late 1920s wrote his doctoral dissertation at Schering's department in Berlin.

The Oriental hypothesis is based on two main propositions in relation to performance practice. The first is that the performance of medieval music calls for a heterogeneously sounding mix of instruments or voices, and secondly, that medieval music requires of the musicians that they approach the music with an improvisational attitude.

In the book *Aufführungspraxis Alter Musik* (1931), Schering lists up a number of different features characteristic of the Oriental mode of singing, like the use of "nasale und guttural Klangfarbe, Falsett, Zittern der Stimme, Herauf und Herabziehen der Intervalle, Stakkati [...] Einstreuen von improvisierten Melismen (*flores armonici*), Hoqueten, Trillern (*reverberationes*), Vorschlägen, Nachschlägen usw."<sup>60</sup> Schering argues that all of these different techniques and principles of improvisations are, so to say, implied in the character of medieval neumatic notation.

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59 Daniel Leech-Wilkinson 2002, *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music: Scholarship, Ideology, Performance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 64-66.

60 Arnold Schering 1931, *Aufführungspraxis Alter Musik*, Verlag von Quelle & Meyer, Leipzig, p. 13.

“Wir nehmen heute mit Recht an, daß die mancherlei Verzierungen, Schleif- und Gleittöne, die die Neumenschrift kennt, nichts anderes gewesen sind als Versuche des Abendlands, improvisierte orientalische Gesangsmanieren andeutungsweise durch die Schrift festzuhalten.“<sup>61</sup>

In his doctoral dissertation *Die Ars nova des XIV. Jahrhunderts in Frankreich und Italien* (published 1931), Marius Schneider introduces the Oriental hypothesis in the context of his enquiry into the issue of the correct application of instruments and voices in medieval performance. The exact problem is to establish if the repertoire under consideration was originally conceived as instrumental music, purely vocal, or if it was meant to be performed with a mix of instruments and voices. He suggests that an answer might be found through the investigation of the living musical practice of the Orient.

Vielleicht können wir uns auf Grund der heute noch im Orient lebenden Musik, mit der das XIV. Jahrhundert so viele Zusammenhänge aufweist, die Aufführung dieser Werke als eine freie, zugleich vokale und instrumentale Aufführung vorstellen, die immer den Charakter einer Improvisation trägt. Der Orientale singt Melodien deren Texte bald in ganz syllabischer Art unterlegt, bald auf weit ausgedehnte Melismen verteilt sind. Das Wort hat für ihn nur wenig Bedeutung. Er macht Pausen, unterbricht seine Worte, um Atem zu holen, begleitet sich dazu im unisono, spielt bald da, bald dort das Instrument, ohne zu singen, oder singt, ohne sich auf dem Instrumente zu begleiten.<sup>62</sup>

Oriental performance practice contains, as we see, a variety of different elements that each could be ordered into one of the above mentioned main factors: heterogeneity of sound and an improvisational attitude to performance. The Oriental mode of singing provides Schering with an antithesis to the romantic homogeneously sounding choir. Schneider furthermore suggests that medieval performance consisted of an eclectic mix of the available means of tone production, mashed together in a more or less improvisational manner. This is, Leech-Wilkinson asserts, “exactly the sort of effect that we hear performers aiming at in recordings [of medieval music] from

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> Marius Schneider 1931, *Die Ars nova des XIV. Jahrhunderts in Frankreich und Italien*, Georg Kallmeyer Verlag, Wolfenbüttel, p. 70.

the 1960s and after [...].”<sup>63</sup> He furthermore maintains that it “can only have been the perceived advantages for musical performance that allowed assumptions about ‘Oriental’ influence to be promoted [...].”<sup>64</sup> The dissemination of the Oriental hypothesis among performance groups is thus explained by the greater liberty it gives to the musicians, both in regards to the possibility for displaying the medieval flora of instruments and in the freedom to fashion the music through improvisation.

It might well be that these pragmatic concerns contributed to the dissemination of the Oriental hypothesis among medieval music performance groups. I do however believe that the prime motivation for adapting the Oriental hypothesis among German interwar musicologists is to be found outside the context of musical practice.

The passages from Schering’s and Schneider’s writings quoted above deal specifically with performance. In “Klangstile” Schering indicates that there is a more profound task at hand for the student of sound history. The establishing of manifest sound styles in relation to a historical epoch or a nation/ethnic group is only the preliminary task. “Eine methodische Untersuchung wird [...] zwar jedesmal von den gegebenen Klangerscheinungen auszugehen haben, aber nicht bei ihnen stehen bleiben, sondern nach den inneren Ursachen fragen, die sie gerade in dieser besonderen Gestalt hervorgebracht haben.”<sup>65</sup> It is my contention that the Oriental hypothesis is, at least partly, introduced in an attempt to get to grasp with the “inner causes” of the sounding surface of music history. “The Oriental” is thus not restricted to specific techniques or attitudes towards musical performance. More importantly it refers to something akin to what Worringer above called a psychic attitude towards the world. The core message of Schering’s paper on sound styles is that the current changes in musical life could be accounted for by the re-emergence of the spiritual conditions characteristic of the Orient and medieval Europe.

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63 Daniel Leech-Wilkinson 2002, *The Modern Invention of Medieval Music*, p. 66.

64 Ibid.

65 Arnold Schering 1928, “Historische und nationale Klangstile“, p. 32.

## The concept of “sound” (*Klang*)

The term “Klangstil” seems to have been introduced in the early 1920s by one of Schering’s former students Wilibald Gurlitt (1891-1963). *Riemann Musik Lexikon* treats the concept of “Klangstile” under the entry on “timbre” (*Klangfarbe*), and introduces it with reference to the writings of Schering and Gurlitt.<sup>66</sup> Although Schering refers to Gurlitt’s influential paper “Die Wandlungen des Klangideals der Orgel im Lichte der Musikgeschichte” (1926) in a footnote, Gurlitt does not receive any credit for the terminology. Instead Schering mentions Carl Stumpf’s (1848-1936) theory of tone-fusion as a precursor for his own theory of sound style.<sup>67</sup>

I will translate “Klang” with the English “sound”. One should however keep in mind that the German term has a somewhat wider field of application than “sound”. When “Klang” is introduced into the musicological vocabulary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was always with reference to composites of sounding elements. Theorists like Hermann Helmholtz (1821-94) and Arthur von Oettingen (1836-1920) define the musical tone (i.e. as it is produced on a musical instrument) as a composite “Klang”, consisting of a number of elemental psychophysical objects. “Klang” was also used with reference to groups of such compounded tones sounding together (e.g. chords).

This composite nature of “Klang” provides the point of departure for Schering’s binary notion of sound style fashioned over the opposition of homogeneity and heterogeneity. The sub-elements of the composite sound either fuse together into one mental image in perception or they preserve, at least to some extent, their individuality.

There are two factors that determine the sound style: the sound of the instruments and the way these sounds are realized and combined in the musical composition. The study of surviving specimen of old instruments, as well as written descriptions of instruments and pictorial sources, will therefore play an important role in establishing the features of a historical sound style. Compositional style and texture (*Satztechnik*) and instrumental timbre, will, according to Schering’s theory, display a reciprocal relationship conforming to the principles governing the overarching historical or national sound style of the musical culture in question.

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66 Hans-Peter Reinecke 1967, “Klangfarbe” in Wilibald Gurlitt & Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (eds.), *Riemann Musik Lexikon*, Zwölfte völlig neubearbeitete Auflage in drei Bände: Sachteil, B. Schott’s Söhne, Mainz, p. 458.

67 Arnold Schering 1928, “Historische und nationale Klangstile“, p. 33.

Solange das Klangideal einer Zeit das gleiche ist, herrscht infolgedessen auch die gleiche Satztechnik; sie verändert sich, sobald in führenden Naturen ein neues Klangerleben durchbricht [...]. Solche Zeitwenden führen dann zwangsweise auch immer zu einer Umwandlung des Instrumentenapparats, deren vorläufiger Abschluß erst erreicht ist, wenn dem neuen Klangerleben Rechnung getragen ist.<sup>68</sup>

Formal analysis of the musical notation and instrumental history/archeology should thus be expected to arrive at the same conclusion concerning a historical or national sound style.

Schering's sound-style theory rests on the assumption that there are two possible attitudes towards sound available, each of which corresponds to fundamentally opposed sound styles: the one based on the principle of "sound-fusion" (*Klangverschmelzung*), the other on "cleaved sound" (*gespaltenen Klänge*).<sup>69</sup> Unlike the pair of concepts used in Schering's earlier article ("abstraction" and "empathy"), the sound ideals are established on the basis of methods belonging to the musicological toolbox. The musicologist is justified in attributing a sound ideal to a music historical epoch if he has been able to ascertain that the objective traits of the corresponding sound style prevail in the musical production of the period.

The sound style manifested in a piece of music is expected to share isomorphic traits with other artistic products created within the same culture, due to their common rootedness in an overarching psychic attitude towards the world. Schering asserts that: "Das künstlerische Wesen eines Zeitalters, eines Volkes, einer sozialen Gemeinschaft, einer Kunstschule hebt sich für Blick und Auffassung dadurch als eine Einheit ab, daß wir eine Basis entdecken, die dem Denken, Fühlen, Wollen, Gestalten gemeinsam ist."<sup>70</sup> He is therefore not surprised to find noticeable similarities in the artistic expressions of late medieval music and Gothic architecture.<sup>71</sup>

The musicologist starts out from the concept of sound style and progresses back via the concept of sound ideal towards its ultimate basis in the worldview of the culture. Musicology could

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68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., p. 31.

71 Ibid., p. 35.

therefore serve as a kind of cultural seismology. Changes in the surface phenomenon (sound style) are interpreted as symptoms of changes taking place within the inner core of the culture.

### **Schering's history of sound and early music revivals**

Whereas Schering in 1922 presented empathy as the one dominating feature of the artistic volition of modernity ever since its introduction in the renaissance, he now inserts two more revolutions in the interval between the late renaissance and the present.<sup>72</sup> He first posits a gradual return to the ideal of cleaved sound in the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, corresponding to the stylistic traits of the baroque. Schering finds the cleaved sound ideal manifested in the increasing preference for soloist singing and playing, and the tendency to substitute the old consorts of homogeneous sounding instruments (e.g. viols) with ensembles consisting of a mix of heterogeneously sounding instruments. The emergence of the classical style of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century is interpreted as a return to the ideal of sound-fusion. The new predilection for homophonic textures marks a break with the polyphonic orientation of the baroque, as does the preference for a more homogeneously sounding orchestral and ensemble layout (e.g. the expansion of the stringed sections of the classical orchestra and the cultivation of the string quartet genre). This new paradigm of sound-fusion was to last throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, culminating in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century orchestra and the compositional techniques of Richard Wagner.

Schering's cyclical model of music history is based on the idea that antithetical principles of sound engage in a constant struggle for dominance in which they succeed each other in an endless circle of action and reaction. There is an ahistorical aspect to Schering's theory of sound style. The circular notion of music history implies that an epoch – defined by its sound style and sound ideal – is further removed from its temporarily closest neighbor than to the epochs eclipsed by or following these neighboring sound epochs. That is, music historical proximity is not measured in linear chronology but rather with reference to each epoch's position within the circle of recurrence.

The fact that the late renaissance and the classical-romantic eras share the same sound ideal means that they are closer to each other than either of them is to the intermediate baroque. The close relationship between the epochs can, according to Schering, be observed in the culminating

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-37.

masterpieces of the late renaissance and the late romantic period. “Es besteht nur ein gradueller Unterschied zwischen dem Klangerleben einer Palestrinaschen und einer Wagnerschen Komposition, kein grundsätzlicher.”<sup>73</sup> The recurrence hypothesis could be used to explain why the Palestrina revival coincided with the classical-romantic paradigm and not earlier or later. It could also account for what Schering claims is the failure of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to appreciate the true nature of the music of the baroque.

[D]ie Renaissancebewegung in der romantischen Periode [ging] vom Ideal der römischen a cappella-Meister, also von einer im Klangtyp verwandten Kunst aus. Das damalige Widerstreben gegen Bach in den breiteren Schichten des Publikums erklärt sich nicht nur aus dem allgemeinen Widerwillen gegen Kontrapunkt und Fuge, sondern ebenso aus dem Nichtverstehen des barocken Klangtyps, den Robert Franz denn auch wirklich mit einer uns unverständlich erscheinenden Freiheit romantisierte, d. h. Klangverschmelzungen hineintrug, wo einst gespaltene Klänge gestanden hatten. Aus seinen Bearbeitungen Bachscher und Händelscher Werke ersieht man überraschend deutlich, in welchen unlösbar engen, nicht ungestraft zu verletzenden Beziehungen barocker Satzstil und barocker Klangstil stehen.<sup>74</sup>

Robert Franz (1815-1892) was a German composer whose editions of major works by the two composers mentioned above (including the St. Matthew-passion and the Messiah) attracted a lot of controversy already during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>75</sup> Schering identifies the main cause of the deficiencies in Franz’s editions, not in the lack of knowledge or skill, but in his position within the historical cycle of sound ideals, denying him proper access to the music of the baroque era.

As we see, there is a revival theory contained within Schering’s cyclical conception of music history. Resurrection of the musical past is conditioned on a congruence in the sound ideals of the reviving culture and the music of the past being revived. Such congruence existed between the musical culture of the late renaissance (represented by Palestrina and the Roman school) and the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Friedrich Blume & Piero Weiss 1964, “Bach in the Romantic Era”, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 3, p. 304.



19<sup>th</sup> century. Both were governed by the ideal of sound-fusion. A similar congruence existed between the gothic (late medieval) age and the age of the baroque, both of which shared the ideal of cleaved sound. The recurrence thesis implies that the musical cultures sooner or later will return to the ideal of cleaved sound. Schering argues – in what must be seen as the core message of “Klangstile” – that the contemporary Western world is currently in the midst of this revolution.

[W]ir stehen heute bereits mitten in einem neuen Flusse. Die Jüngsten haben sich – ohne vom Gesetz des periodischen Wechsels der Klangstile etwas zu ahnen – instinktiv wieder dem Gegenteil, dem Ideal des gespaltenen, disparaten Klangs zugewandt. In der Art der instrumentalen Besetzung in der Wahl absonderlichster Klangkombinationen, in der Vorliebe für vagierende Stimmen, wie sie die Technik der Jazzmusik fordert, in der ganzen Satzweise und Auffassung der Zusammenklänge machen sich überraschende Ähnlichkeiten teils mit der Musik des Barock, teils mit der der Gotik bemerkbar.<sup>76</sup>

The popularity of jazz music is interpreted as a sign of receptivity to musical styles of the past. Schering is not alone in this. Heinrich Bessler, as we shall see in the next chapter, advanced a similar idea, where jazz and the contemporaneous cultivation of early music were taken as indications of the demise of the classical concert culture. Jazz music typically mixes instruments with varied timbral qualities, similarly to the music composed in epochs dominated by the ideal of cleaved sound according to Schering’s sound-style theory. Furthermore, it makes use of other forms of reception than those which are known to the classical concert, dance being a dominant mode. Although the behavior in the receptive context is not explicitly part of Schering’s sound-style theory, as we shall see later, it goes well with the vitalistic presumptions inherent in the ideas about cleaved sound.

As we saw above, sound style is merely the artistic manifestation of underlying spiritual forces of culture. A congruence of sound style between two epochs/cultures suggests a similarity in the spiritual orientation of the life world. That implies that the new age, heralded by the youth through their turn towards the ideal of cleaved sound, is motivated by forces similar to those which characterized gothic and baroque culture. I will return to this below. First I will take a closer look

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76 Arnold Schering 1928, “Historische und nationale Klangstile“, p. 37.

at the arguably dominating force in the German early music revival during the interwar years, the Organ Movement, and its most important theoretician, the earlier mentioned Wilibald Gurlitt.

## The German Organ Movement and Wilibald Gurlitt

The German Organ Movement (*Orgelbewegung* or *Orgel-Erneuerungsbewegung*) had its origin in circles comprising organists and organ builders, but from the early 1920s on it received strong impulses from musicology as well as from its affiliations with liturgical reform movements.<sup>77</sup> The movement grew out of an interest in the early organ repertoire, and particularly the music of J. S. Bach. Its theoretical basis is commonly associated with the publication of Albert Schweitzer's (1875-1965) *Deutsche und Französische Orgelbaukunst* (1906). The message of the book could be summarized in Schweitzer's punchline: "Zurück zu den von Bach verlangten polyphonen, nicht orchestralen Orgeln!"<sup>78</sup> Schweitzer's reference to the "required organ" reveals the conviction, essential to the Organ Movement, that organ sound and compositional texture were intimately connected.

The practical goals of the Organ Movement were to promote the restoration, rebuilding and use of baroque organs, as well as to implement certain of the old (pre-19<sup>th</sup> century) principles of organ building in the construction of new instruments. In Schweitzer's view, the instruments constructed by the Alsatian organ builder Andreas Silbermann (1678-1734), whom he calls "ein Genius des Orgelbaues"<sup>79</sup>, represent the paradigmatic type of sound for which the music of Bach seemed tailored.

The musicologist Wilibald Gurlitt was another important figure in the Organ Movement. He contributed both as a theoretician and as a prime mover for the practical application of old principles of organ building. He was among the driving forces behind the construction of the so-called Praetorius-organ in Freiburg (finished in 1921). It was the first attempt to reconstruct an early baroque organ based on surviving instructions, in this case on specifications given in the second

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77 Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht 1967, *Die Orgelbewegung*, Musikwissenschaftliche Verlag-Gesellschaft mbH., Stuttgart, p. 9.

78 Albert Schweitzer 1906, *Deutsche und Französische Orgelbaukunst und Orgelkunst*, Druck und Verlag von Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, p. 28.

79 Ibid., p. 17.

volume of the composer and theorist Michael Praetorius's *Syntagma Musicum* (1619). Even more important is Gurlitt's sound-style theory, which provided the movement with an elaborate theoretical justification for the importance of organ reconstruction and restoration. As mentioned earlier, the terms *Klangstil* and *Klangideal* and the program of research associated with this terminology are customarily attributed to Gurlitt.<sup>80</sup>

On the most basic level Gurlitt's theory of sound ideal is a theory of artistic volition. It proceeds from the assumption that the baroque organ sound is based on a corresponding sound ideal, rather than caused by material resistance/technical limitations in the art of organ building. The presumption is that the baroque organ was perfectly capable of satisfying the needs of the baroque sound-will ("Klangwillen").

Although the baroque organ undergoes an evolution – illustrated by Gurlitt's subdivision of the epoch into an early, high and late baroque sound type<sup>81</sup> – there is nevertheless a unity in the baroque sound ideal that holds the epoch together. This unity is provided by the prevalence of a wind-oriented sound type, which Gurlitt argues is a constant feature throughout the baroque, defined as the period 1600-1750.

Gurlitt frames the age of the musical baroque with a preceding and a succeeding sound ideal. The pre-baroque organ (up until about 1600) exhibits a sound type based on the ideal of the human voice, or more specifically, the kind of sound produced through a merger of human voices in acappella choir singing.<sup>82</sup> The sound type of the post-baroque organ is characterized by its appropriation of the sound of stringed instruments. Gurlitt likens the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century organ to the influential Mannheim court orchestra that flourished around the same time, and which differs from its baroque counterpart by the greater weight given to stringed instruments.<sup>83</sup>

Gurlitt's sound-style theory proceeds from the thesis that the sound ideal of an age manifests itself in every part of its musical life. One should therefore expect to find traces of the predominant sound type of the period in a variety of different places. This includes the frequency of a particular

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80 See, For instance, Gerhard Pietzsch 1932, "Der Wandel des Klangideales in der Musik" *Acta Musicologica*, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 56.

81 Wilibald Gurlitt 1973, "Die Wandlungen des Klangideals der Orgel im Lichte der Musikgeschichte", in Wilibald Gurlitt (ed.), *Bericht Über die Freiburger Tagung für Deutsche Orgelkunst vom 27. bis 30. Juli 1926*, Bärenreiter, Kassel, pp. 26-27.

82 Ibid., p 26.

83 Ibid., p. 27.

instrumental group in solo or ensemble playing and in the instrumental layout of the orchestra, as well as in compositional techniques and musical textures. Furthermore, Gurlitt suggests that the sound ideal of an age manifests itself in the valuation and hierarchisation of the different instrumental groups. “[Es gilt] die geschichtliche Notwendigkeit einzusehen, in der ein bestimmter Musikstil mit einem bestimmten Klangideal, und ein bestimmtes Klangideal mit einer bestimmten Auswahl und Rangordnung des Musikinstrumentariums verbunden sind [...]“<sup>84</sup> It is therefore an integral part of the study of historical sound styles to trace the distribution in practice, as well as written evaluations of the different instrumental groups throughout history, so as to establish the historical hierarchies of instruments in each epoch, from the Kings and Queens down to the most humble underlings.

Der wechselnde Rang, den die einzelnen Instrumente mit ihrem Schrifftum und dem Stand ihrer Spieler zueinander einnehmen, richtet sich nach Art und Maß, wie sie ihrer Natur nach das je herrschende Klangbedürfnis zu befriedigen vermögen, und die hierdurch bedingte Hinordnung des Musikinstrumentariums einer Epoche auf ein jeweils führendes Instrument – ihren König, ihre Königin – bekundet sich in einer abgestuften Anpassung an die musikalische Eigenart desjenigen Instruments, welches das Klangideal der Epoche am vollkommensten zu repräsentieren fähig ist.<sup>85</sup>

Changes in sound ideals correspond with revolutions in the instrumental hierarchies. Gurlitt’s program for the study of historical sound ideals gives a prominent role to instrumental history and to the social history of musicians. In order to establish the instrumental hierarchy of a music-historical epoch, the musicologists will need to consult written testimonies, which attest to the evaluation and the prevalence of an instrumental group, as well as the social position of musicians. Gurlitt supports the “wind-ideal” hypothesis by pointing to the fact that registers of German court ensembles (from the time of the transition between the renaissance and the baroque) show the predominance of wind instruments compared to stringed or keyboard instruments.<sup>86</sup> This fact is

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

taken as an indication that wind instruments, at this time and place in history, were valued above the other instrumental groups.

Gurlitt's program for the study of sound style reached further than merely the antiquarian reconstruction of the authentic sound world. Historical sound styles should, as Gurlitt maintains, "als Ausdruck individuell, zeitlich und national begrenzten geschichtlichen Lebens zu verstehen [...]." <sup>87</sup> The relevance of early music to contemporary musical life should be understood in this context, as traces of earlier forms of life. It is in this context that early music becomes relevant for modern society. The music of the baroque is however not immediately accessible to the modern listener. Gurlitt blames the sound ideal inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> century for blocking the path towards the musical baroque. The modern listener is therefore expected to spend some effort in overcoming the inherited hierarchy of sound.

Um die Eigenart dieser sozialen Rangordnung der Musiker des deutschen Barockzeitalters zu verstehen, muß man sich schon von hier aus vergleichsweise klar machen, welche geringe Rolle die Blasinstrumente und Bläser im 19. Jahrhundert bis auf unserer Tage spielen, wie gering ihr Ansehen ist gegenüber dem der Tasteninstrumentenspieler, der Streicher oder gar der Dirigenten, und daß sie unter den Musikliebhabern und in der Hausmusik fast völlig fehlen. Es bedarf also einer gründlichen Umwertung aller klanglichen Werte, einer inneren Umschaltung der Höreinstellung, um der historischen Klanganschauung der deutschen Barockmusik gerecht zu werden. <sup>88</sup>

Gurlitt's call for a "transvaluation of all sonic values" represents a variation over a familiar Nietzschean phrase. Throughout his authorship, Friedrich Nietzsche repeatedly called for a "transvaluation of all values" (*Umwertung aller Werte*), often advanced in relation to his critique of

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

Christianity. The Nietzschean transvaluation involved recognizing the life-denying nature of Christian morality, and the need for substituting it for a morality based on life-affirming values.<sup>89</sup>

My contention is that the reevaluation of sound heralded by the Organ movement and scholars like Schering and Gurlitt must be interpreted in context of a discourse on sound inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The transvaluation of instrumental hierarchies is linked to a corresponding transvaluation of the cultural values that had been attached to the various instruments within a discourse whose structure of evaluation had begun to crack.

In the following I will take a closer look at the study of ancient instruments in 19<sup>th</sup> century music historiography and classical philology. My contention is that the hierarchies of sonic values are particularly pronounced in this literature, which, through the logic of genealogy, traces the origins of instruments back to the spiritual nature of peoples and gods of the ancient world.

## **Strings and winds in the 19<sup>th</sup> century historiography of ancient music**

### **Ambros's evolutionary ladder of instruments**

The kind of hierarchy of instruments that Gurlitt challenged his readers to overturn in 1926 is perfectly illustrated at the very beginning of the first volume of August Wilhelm Ambros's *Geschichte der Musik* (1862). Ambros presents his hierarchy of instruments in the form of what could be described as a three-stepped evolutionary ladder, corresponding to the three major groups of instruments in the ancient world, as well as in the symphonic orchestra of Ambros's time. The first step is represented by percussion instruments, the second by wind instruments, while stringed instruments represent the third and final step.<sup>90</sup> The principle driving Ambros's evolutionary

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89 As expressed in the description given in *Zur Genealogie der Moral* of Christianity as a "workshop where ideals are fabricated": "Es scheint mir, dass man lügt; eine zuckrige Milde klebt an jedem Klange. Die Schwäche soll zum Verdienste umgelogen werden, es ist kein Zweifel [...]." Friedrich Nietzsche 1921, *Nietzsche's Werke, Erste Abtheilung, Band VII*, Alfred Kröner Verlag, Stuttgart, p. 329.

90 August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. 4.

narrative is that of “ease of discovery”. Instruments requiring the least amount of refinement of natural materials are thought to be more primitive than instruments requiring a more advanced preparation. For instance, the construction of a simple reed flute requires minor preparations compared to a stringed lyre, and therefore, according to this theory, also a lesser degree of cultural advancement.

In addition to signifying the temporal order in which the instruments entered history, the evolutionary ladder is constructed on a theory of the development of spirit. The prevalence of use or status enjoyed by an instrument among a people/nation is taken as a sign of the state of development of their culture. “Die Saiteninstrumente haben nicht blos im gebildeten Orchester, sondern schon in der Kindheit der Musik den Vorrang vor den Blasinstrumenten, und bezeichnen den höheren Culturgrad.”<sup>91</sup> Consequently, a people/nation among whom the wind instruments dominate would therefore be expected to stand at a lower step of the ladder of cultural evolution compared to a nation whose musical life is dominated by stringed instruments.

According to the “ease of discovery” hypothesis, one should expect to find a predominance of percussion- and wind instruments in primitive cultures, due to their greater relative proximity to natural materials compared to stringed instruments. However, the fact that both wind and stringed as well as percussion instruments existed side by side among most ancient peoples suggests that lack of skills in transforming natural materials cannot be the only explanation for the existence of percussion and wind dominated music cultures. In addition to a primitivism of construction, there is also a primitivism of function and effect. Ambros’s evaluation of the different instruments is therefore done with reference to the contexts in which the instruments are used, and the purpose of their use (e.g. for edification or stirring the passions).

Apart from Ambros’s history, none of the major German-language music histories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century deals with ancient music in any depth. Academic specialization had made ancient music a topic for the classical philologist, a fact which also manifests itself in the excessive amount of references and quotations from the writings by classical philologists scattered throughout Ambros’s study. He hardly mentions any music historians, and when he does, it is usually in order to criticize their outdated approach (Forkel was a favorite target in this regard).

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91 Ibid., p. 4.

I will therefore, in the following, restrict my focus to texts written by philologists rather than music historians. My focus will be on the discourse on winds and strings in general, invariant of the differences among the instruments belonging to each group. In 19<sup>th</sup> century historiography of ancient music, the wind versus string opposition is centered on two subgroups of instruments, the flutes and the lyres, which were the main forms of (tonal) instruments in the ancient world. While the flute and the lyre will be the main protagonists in the following investigation on the discourse on ancient instruments, they also, in accordance with Ambros's hierarchization of instruments, stand as representatives of winds and strings in general.

## **Oriental flutes and gods**

Although the flute evidently played an important part in the musical life of ancient Greece, there is an expressed tendency among 19<sup>th</sup> century writers to view it as a foreign instrument, brought into the Greek lands as an accessory to migrating cults. 19<sup>th</sup> century classical philology generally refers to the flute as an instrument of Oriental origin. Ambros's ascription of an "Asiatic" origin to the flute is therefore in conformity with the established view.<sup>92</sup>

This Oriental origin hypothesis was integrated into a larger complex of attributes of the archetypical Oriental. The use of music in religious ceremonies was typically interpreted along this Oriental-Greek division, where divinities or rites involving the use of the flute are taken to be of an Oriental origin. Ambros is typical in this regard when he asserts: "Nach asiatischem Vorbilde werden die Dionysischen Chöre und Tänze von Flöten begleitet, während bei den Chorreigen Apollons die Kithara ertönt."<sup>93</sup> The idea that the Dionysian celebrations were of an Oriental origin, or at least strongly influenced by the Orient, was widely held within 19<sup>th</sup> century classical philology.

The association of the Dionysian with the Orient was suggested by Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) as early as around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>94</sup> The association was maintained and

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92 Ibid., p. 476.

93 Ibid., p. 246.

94 Max L. Baeumer 1976, "Nietzsche and the Tradition of the Dionysian" in James C. O'Flaherty, Timothy F. Sellner & Robert M. Helm (eds.), *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, p. 178.



elaborated in the writings of classical philologists like Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert (1780-1860) and Joseph Görres (1776-1848), and above all Georg Friedrich Creuzer (1771-1858) who presented it as part of a more elaborate theory of an Oriental origin of the core myths and symbols of the ancient Greek world. Creuzer's survey of ancient religion in his *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (1810-12), was pioneering in that it, as George S. Williamson remarks, "presented the dark side of ancient Greece, uncovering orgies and other cult practices and tracing them back to the Orient."<sup>95</sup>

The ascription of an Oriental provenance to Dionysus might have its basis in a literal interpretation of attributes given the god by the Greeks themselves. Dionysus was always an outsider in the Greek pantheon. He was a mediator between earth and mount Olympus, both due to his mortal heritage (born of a human mother) and his association with the chthonic, agrarian and pastoral. He is described as a traveler coming from the east or the south, riding a chariot drawn by wild animals and with a convoy of satyrs and nymphs. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the motif of the traveling outsider was taken more literally as indicating a foreign origin. That is, the image of the traveling god seems to have been interpreted as an anthropomorphic account of the traveling cult.

Another factor that might have played a role in the attribution of an Oriental provenance to Dionysus is the problem to reconcile the character of the Dionysian celebrations with the inherited (18<sup>th</sup> century) image of ancient Greece, as the embodiment of the principles of harmony and restraint.<sup>96</sup> This "classical", in the aesthetic sense, image of ancient Greece had been a feature of German Graecophilia since at least the time of Winckelman.

Apart from Creuzer's early forays into the dark foundation of Greek culture, the arguably most important contribution to the shattering of the classical image of Greece was delivered in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872). It has been remarked that Nietzsche's account of ancient Greece owed much to romantic philology.<sup>97</sup> He follows the established tradition of ascribing a foreign origin to Dionysus. In a brief genealogy he traces the roots of the Dionysian

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<sup>95</sup> George S. Williamson 2004, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 122.

<sup>96</sup> In the entry on "Dionysos" in *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* (1834), the author finds it evident "daß der Begriff des Gottes nicht ursprünglich bei den Hellenen selbst entstanden, sondern aus der Fremde zu ihnen gekommen sein, und in diesem Falle konnte er nirgends anders herkommen, als aus dem Morgenlande, aus Asien. In der That findet man auch in den ihm beigelegten Attributen und in dem von ihm erzählten Sagen so viel Orientalisches, daß an diesem Ursprunge nicht zu zweifeln sein scheint." Johann Samuel Ersch & Johann Gottfried Gruber (eds.) 1834, *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste, Erste Section, Fünfundzwanzigster Theil: DIE – DIPYR*, F. A. Brockhaus, Leipzig, p. 358.

<sup>97</sup> George S. Williamson 2004, *The Longing for Myth in Germany*, p. 239.

from Greece back via Asia Minor to Babylon.<sup>98</sup> Although *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is widely seen as a celebration of the Dionysian, Nietzsche is nonetheless careful to signal a distance towards the Dionysian in its original and pure Oriental form. His association of this pure dionysianism with violence and barbarism makes him emphasize “die ungeheure Kluft [...], welche die *dionysischen Griechen* von den dionysischen Barbaren trennt.”<sup>99</sup> The Dionysian and related festivities, as celebrated outside of the Greek lands, were characterized by a “abscheulichen Mischung von Wollust und Grausamkeit.”<sup>100</sup> What sets the Greeks apart from their barbarian neighbors was the fundamental Apollonian orientation of their culture, which provided them with the means of objectifying the Dionysian, so as to bring it into view, into the sphere of the aesthetical. The idea that the Greeks mitigated the nature of the Dionysian festivities, so as to make them more in conformity with their disposition for the ordered and well measured, seems to have been commonplace among Nietzsche’s philologist predecessors.<sup>101</sup>

In an 1823 publication of the German historian and philologist Karl Hoeck (1794-1877), we find the hypothesis of the Oriental origin of the flute integrated into a narrative of the dispersion of Asiatic religious worship. Hoeck’s thesis is that the flute arrived in Greece from Phrygia – an ancient kingdom in central Anatolia – where it played an integral part of the religious ceremonies of the Phrygians. He also suggests that instruments like the tympanum (an ancient hand drum) and the cymbal were introduced to Greece through encounters with Phrygians. In their ancient Phrygian homeland all these instruments were intimately bound up with religious ceremonies in which also dance played an integral part.<sup>102</sup>

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98 Friedrich Nietzsche 1907, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, p. 23.

99 Ibid., p. 26.

100 Ibid., p. 27.

101 The classical scholar Max Duncker writes in his *Die Geschichte der Griechen* (1857): “Alles dies hob jetzt die Stimmung bei den Dionysosfesten über die Schranken des gewöhnlichen Lebens hinaus. Indeß verläugnete sich der den Griechen zu eigen gewordene schöne Sinn des Maßes auch hier nicht; er wirkte ordnend und mildernd auf die den Thrakern und Kleinasiaten entlehnten Riten dieser Feste zurück.“ Max Duncker 1857, *Geschichte des Alterthums, Vierter Band: Die Geschichte der Griechen, Zweiter Band*, Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, Berlin, pp. 331-332.

102 Karl Hoeck 1823, *Kreta: Ein Versuch zur Aufhellung der Mythologie und Geschichte, der Religion und Verfassung dieser Insel, von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Römer-Herrschaft, Erster Band*, Carl Eduard Rosenbusch, Göttingen, p. 209.

Die Flöte war hier [in Phrygien] ein Haupttheil der alten religiösen Musik, und stand im engsten Bezuge zum Kybele-Dienste. Dieser Göttinn vor allen sang Hyagnis,<sup>[103]</sup> und wenn auch dem Dionysos, Pan, den Satyrn, und andern Göttern seine Kunst diente: so lernen wir daraus, dass später jene phrygische Flöte den orgiastischen Culten in weitem Umfange gemein wurde. [...] Mit der Verbreitung des vorderasiatischen Naturdienstes in andere Länder ging die Einführung der Flöte Hand in Hand.<sup>104</sup>

Hoeck's Oriental hypothesis is partly based on his reading of the ancient source material, including the Homeric epics. The absence of the flute from the *Odyssey*, and the merely two references to it in the *Iliad* – where it is first encountered in “Asian” Troy – are interpreted as an indication that the flute arrived in Greece at a relatively late date. Hoeck concludes that the flute must have been introduced to Greek culture as an integral part of the nature worship of the Phrygians.<sup>105</sup>

The worship of the goddess Cybele spread westwards after Greek encounters with Phrygian cultures following the colonization of western Anatolia. The Greeks appropriated Cybele to Greek deities of earth and fertility like Gaia or Demeter. In writings and depictions she often appears in company with Pan or Dionysus.<sup>106</sup> The flute is thus used as an attribute of the worshiper of deities associated with earth and fertility. This includes both pastoral deities (like Pan and the Satyrs) as well as chthonic deities of the inner earth and agrarian culture (like Demeter, Cybele, and Dionysus). Percussion instruments and dance are also integrated into this complex of interrelated ideas which also encompassed the Orient, the peasantry and the flute.

A similar Phrygian hypothesis is expressed in Karl Otfried Müller's (1797-1840) *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (1841). Müller has been described as “probably the most eminent classicist of the years from 1820 to 1840.”<sup>107</sup> He was greatly influenced by Herder's ideas about the national character of myth. One of the main goals of Müller's theory of myth is to counter the

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103 Hyagnis is counted among the mythical inventors of the flute and mother of Marsyas – the flute-playing satyr famous for challenging Apollo to a musical contest.

104 Karl Hoeck 1823, *Kreta*, pp. 224-225.

105 Ibid., p. 223.

106 Maya Vassileva 2001, “Further Considerations on the Cult of Kybele”, *Anatolian Studies*, Vol. 51, p. 52.

107 Robert D. Richardson Jr. 1972, “Karl Otfried Müller”, in Burton Feldman & Robert D. Richardson Jr. (eds.), *The Rise of Modern Mythology 1680-1860*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 416.

Oriental hypothesis of Creutzer, showing instead that the Greek pantheon and mythology “rose naturally, organically, and historically from Greek history.”<sup>108</sup> This does not mean that he denies any Eastern influence at all. However, he tends to restrict the Oriental influence to the pastoral and agrarian (nature) cults of the Greeks, which displayed a character that Müller, together with his 19<sup>th</sup> century colleagues, found hard to assimilate with the established image of Greek culture. Müller suggests an especially strong link between Phrygians and Boeotians, the inhabitants of the Greek lands situated to the north-west of Attica. The Boetians provide a bridge between the Orient and Greece, by mediating Phrygian influence, both in religious practice and in music.

Das Flötenspiel war, wie wir öfter bemerkt haben, eigentlich von Kleinasien zu den Griechen gekommen; und auf eine solche Ueberlieferung aus Phrygien deutet auch der Umstand, daß Pindar bei seinem Hause in Theben ein kleines Heiligthum der Göttermutter und des Pan hatte, der Phrygischen Götter, auf welche die ersten Hymnen zur Flöte gesungen worden sein sollen. Aber gerade die Böoter hatten frühzeitig das Flötenspiel bei sich einheimisch gemacht; der Kopaische See in ihrem Lande lieferte treffliches Flötenrohr, und der Dienst des Dionysos, der von Theben ausgegangen sein sollte, verlangte besonders die sehr mannigfache und rauschende Musik der Flöten.<sup>109</sup>

Thebes, the main city of ancient Boeotia, is the mythical birthplace of Dionysus. Müller argues that Dionysus always remained an outsider among the gods, whose worship never reached the same universal following in Greece enjoyed by the other Olympian deities.<sup>110</sup>

Boeotia also plays an important role in Ambros’s treatment of the flute in the ancient Greek world. He notes that while the Athenians expressed a disdain for the art of flute playing, the Boeotians had seemingly no qualms about it.<sup>111</sup> This affirmation or denial of an instrument is taken

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108 Ibid., p. 416.

109 Karl Otfried Müller 1841, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur, Erster Band*, Verlage bei Josef Mar und Komp., Breslau, p. 393.

110 Ibid., p. 23.

111 “Der freigeborne Athener verschmähte es fortan, die Flöte blasen zu lernen; da man aber den einmal beliebten musikalischen Genuss nicht gerne entbehren mochte, so fanden fremde, insbesondere böotische Flötenbläser zu Athen die beste Aufnahme.” August Wilhelm Ambros 1862, *Geschichte der Musik, Erster Band*, p. 478.

to signify a more fundamental fissure in Greek culture. The flute and the lyre are taken to represent the musical symptoms of the cultural/spiritual schism between the two peoples. In passages in which he treats the musical practice of the Boeotians, the Athenians are repeatedly drawn into the comparison for the sake of providing a contrasting position. He asserts that “[es] war kein kleiner Beweis für die ‘nicht ethische, sondern orgiastische’ Natur der Flöte, dass die Böotier in Bildung u. s. w. die Athener nicht erreichten, sondern etwas Bäuerisches und Rohes behielten.”<sup>112</sup> The rural-urban distinction seems to be important in the contrast between the Boeotians and the Athenians. The Boeotians are given the role of the raw and uncultivated peasantry, while the Athenians represent the cultivated and civilized.

The classical scholar Lorenz Grasberger (1830-1903) devotes a chapter in his multivolume *Erziehung und Unterricht im Klassischen Alterthum* (1875) to the flute and lyre in antiquity. His view on the contrasting merits of the two instruments is fashioned over a similar distinction between the “orgiastic” and the “edifying” as that found in Ambros’s history.

Nationales Instrument, so zu sagen, war für die Griechen [...] die Leier, ein Saiteninstrument, dessen Apollon selbst sich bedient und das den Gesang und Vortrag der menschlichen Stimme begleitet. Die Blasinstrumente und insbesondere die Flöte [...] sind asiatischen Ursprungs und schliessen bei ihrem gellen, lärmenden Ton das menschliche Wort aus, beunruhigen und berauschen das Gemüth, und eignen sich schon deshalb vorherrschend für bakchische Feste *des Dionysos und der verwandten Gottheiten*.<sup>113</sup>

While the lyre has the effect of calming the passions and facilitating a vehicle for the communication of sung or recited words, the flute has a subversive effect on education as it arouses passions and obscures the sung or recited logos. Grasberger concludes by stating that:

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112 Ibid., p. 483.

113 Lorenz Grasberger 1875, *Erziehung und Unterricht im Klassischen Alterthum: Der Musische Unterricht oder die Elementarschule bei den Griechen und Römern*, Druck und Verlag der Stahel’schen Buch- und Kunsthandlung, Würzburg, p. 367.

Die Flöte ist keineswegs geeignet, eine sittliche Stimmung in der Seele hervorzubringen, sondern sie versetzt vielmehr in orgische Begeisterung, so dass man ihren Gebrauch auf die Gelegenheit versparen muss, wo es bei öffentlichen Schauspielen mehr auf Reinigung der Leidenschaften als auf Belehrung abgesehen ist.<sup>114</sup>

Grasberger's reference to ethical attunement (*sittliche Stimmung*) points in the direction of the theological discourse on musical edification. The edifying effect of the lyre resides in its ability to attune the mind through effects similar to those attributed to true church music in the musical theology of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (i.e. subduing the passions and directing attention towards the sung text). It is perhaps not surprising that a 19<sup>th</sup> century text on education should show traces of a religious inheritance, as the very notion of "Bildung" itself, as Reinhart Koselleck has remarked, was originally derived from a religious discourse.<sup>115</sup>

## Preliminary summary

I will now summarize the main findings of my investigation of the discourse on ancient instruments in 19<sup>th</sup> century German writings. My focus has been on the lyre and the flute as the two main groups of melodic instruments in the ancient world. I will conclude that there is a discernible pattern in the treatment of the two instruments in the literature.

There is a tendency to associate the lyre with Greece and the city (especially Athens). It is also associated with the God Apollo, who was given the instrument as an attribute by the Greeks. Furthermore it is portrayed as a means for edification (due to its suitability for accompanying words and its ability to subdue passions). The 19<sup>th</sup> century discourse on the ancient lyre has certain resemblances to an older discourse on Christian music.

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114 Ibid., p. 370.

115 "Es zeichnet den deutschen Bildungsbegriff geradezu aus, nicht spezifisch bürgerlich oder politisch konzipiert worden sein – sonder primär theologisch." Reinhart Koselleck 1990, "Einleitung – Zur anthropologischen und semantischen Struktur der Bildung" in Reinhart Koselleck (ed.), *Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert, Teil II: Bildungsgüter und Bildungswissen*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, p. 16.

The flute, on the other hand, is consistently associated with the Orient and the peasantry. It is typically described as unsuitable for the purpose of edification, an assertion that is explained both with reference to the tendency of its sounds to obscure the sung word, its association with raw and uneducated peoples (like the Boeotians) and its use in orgiastic rituals (which highlights its ability to raise the passions and subdue selfhood/self-determination). Consistent with its association with the peasantry, the flute is allied with deities of fertility, the agrarian and the pastoral, like Dionysus, Pan, Cybele, etc., both as an attribute of divinities (Pan and the satyrs) and as an instrument used in associated religious celebrations.

## The Copernican revolution of sound

### Orientalisms

In the wake of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), and the opening up of the whole field of post-colonial studies, the term "orientalism" has come to designate a patronizing and stereotypical view of the Orient, serving as a negative mirror image of the West. Said's study was partly based on an analysis of the academic discourse of Oriental studies, which he interpreted as serving the cause of legitimizing Western political domination over the East. He has however received some criticism for omitting the rather extensive German contribution to the field of Oriental studies. The cause behind the omission has been suggested to lie in the fact that Germany did not fit into Said's main thesis that "imperialism was the only important factor shaping [the orientalist] cultural discourse",<sup>116</sup> due to its relatively modest colonial expansions (of which none in Asia). The inclusion of the German contributions might have led to a more nuanced image of European orientalist discourse. Suzanne Marchand has argued that German Oriental studies (*Orientalistik*), rather than serving the cause of Eurocentrism, contributed more than any other scholarly field to the cultural dethronement of the West. "German orientalism helped to destroy Western self-satisfaction, and to provoke a momentous change in the culture of the West: the relinquishing of Christianity and

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<sup>116</sup> Suzanne Marchand 2004, "Philhellenism and the Furor Orientalis", *Modern Intellectual History*, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 333.

classical antiquity as universal norms.”<sup>117</sup> This does not mean that the stereotypical Orient disappeared from the academic discourse or the popular imagination. It was rather the case that the *Orientalistik* of the early late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century coincided with a reevaluation of the classical heritage, in which the (still stereotypical) image of the Orient could function as a new guiding star. There are different ways in which ideas about the Orient have provided models of emulation for the West. Schopenhauer’s “contemplative Orient” is in many ways the opposite of “the vitalistic Orient”, which emerged during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The idea was now that the Orient represented life in opposition to the life-denying (or dying) culture of the West. In *Der Antichrist* Nietzsche aligns the classical-Christian heritage with the life-denying, which he contrasts to the life-affirming attitude of the “Orient” (in the present context represented by the Arabian-Moorish culture). “Die wunderbare maurische Cultur-Welt Spaniens, uns im Grunde verwandter, zu Sinn und Geschmack redender als Rom und Griechenland, wurde niedergetreten (— ich sage nicht von was für Füßen —), warum? weil sie vornehmen, weil sie Männer-Instinkten ihre Entstehung verdankte, weil sie zum Leben Ja sagte [...]”.<sup>118</sup>

## The chthonic and uranian

I will argue that there is a discursive reservoir for the reevaluation of the Orient contained within the Swiss classical scholar Johann Jakob Bachofen’s (1815-1887) distinction between the chthonic and the uranian. Bachofen, who was an older colleague of Nietzsche at Basel, is today mostly remembered for his thesis that pre-historical cultures were politically organized on the principle of matriarchy. The matriarchal thesis also plays a central role in the chthonic-uranian opposition. The dualism refers to universal principles of culture, determining the political and socioeconomic organization as well as religious/metaphysical ideas.

Even though neither Ambros nor any of the earlier mentioned classical philologists applies Bachofen’s terminology, the chthonic-uranian distinction is structured on a pattern of antitheses that mirrors the discourse on ancient Greece and the Orient in the 19th century. It has been remarked

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117 Suzanne Marchand 2001, “German Orientalism and the Decline of the West”, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 145, No. 4, p. 465.

118 Friedrich Nietzsche 1899, *Nietzsche’s Werke, Erste Abtheilung, Band VIII*, Druck und Verlag von C. G. Naumann, Leipzig, p. 309.



that Bachofen's distinction is fashioned over the opposition of the Orient and Greco-Roman antiquity.<sup>119</sup> There is also a clear parallel, as Charles Bambach notes, to Creuzer's notion of "the ongoing antagonism between chthonic and Olympian gods".<sup>120</sup> As we have seen, the chthonic deities – i.e. those residing in the subterranean and typically associated with fertility – were generally attributed with an Oriental origin by the classical scholars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The chthonic-uranian distinction highlights some hidden resources in the discourse on ancient cultures, which will gradually drift towards the surface as the century progresses, to finally appear as important elements in the reevaluation of the ancient heritage during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The uranian is named after Uranus, the primordial god of the heavens in Greek mythology. "The uranian" ties together a number of different phenomena which stand in a metonymical or metaphorical relationship to the sky and the heavens. Bachofen exploits the metonymical connection between the sky, the light and the sun, the sky being the medium of light and the container of the sun. Furthermore, he evokes the established metaphorical link between sun/light and reason/truth, provided by the fundamental metaphor "knowing is seeing". The metaphor was well established in antiquity.<sup>121</sup> All these qualities of the uranian are united under the god Apollo. In terms of political organization the uranian principle corresponds to patriarchal rule.

The chthonic is named after the Greek expression for earth *χθών*, a term typically used in referring to the subterranean rather than the surface crust. Bachofen derives a similar chain of metaphors from the chthonic, each of them negating a corresponding uranian principle. The chthonic is linked with darkness and night as opposed to light and day, the irrational and nature as opposed to reason and culture, and so on.

However, instead of founding the chthonic-uranian dualism on the opposition of darkness and light, Bachofen bases it on the elements of earth and heaven. This is significant. The Platonic metaphors of light and darkness refer back to the element of air/heaven as the medium of light. The dualism of light-darkness is thus one of affirmation and negation. Darkness is the absence of light,

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119 Damian Valdez 2009, "Bachofen's Rome and the Fate of the Feminine Orient", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 70, No. 3, p. 429.

120 Charles Bambach 2012, "The idea of the archaic in German thought: Creuzer – Bachofen – Nietzsche – Heidegger", in Paul Bishop (ed.), *The Archaic: The Past in the Present*, Routledge, London, p. 151.

121 George Lakoff & Mark Johnson 1999, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, Basic Books, New York, p. 85.

ignorance is the absence of truth and so on. As we see, the very distinction appears within the context of the uranian element of air/heaven. The replacement of darkness/night with that of the earth as antithesis to light/day explodes this model of presence and absence. Bachofen equips the chthonic with its own positively defined features, rather than merely being the absence of the uranian. Consequently, the uranian could be defined as the absence of the chthonic, just as much as the other way around.

Another important feature of Bachofen's theory is the thesis that all cultures (also uranian) are in a sense rooted in the chthonic (i.e. the subterranean). The idea is akin to similar paradoxical notions of "dark origins": that light emerges from darkness, reason from unreason, consciousness from the subconscious, morality from the immoral etc. By the turn of the century a number of different strategies had been introduced for the purpose of unveiling dark foundations. Marxian political analysis, Nietzschean genealogy and Freudian psychoanalysis all represent methodological approaches that proceed from their sources, be it texts or the chat of patients, with a kind of distrust akin to what Paul Ricœur has labeled "the hermeneutics of suspicion". The 20<sup>th</sup> century culture of suspicion is founded on the conviction that, to lend a simile from Bachofen's theory, the roots of surface phenomena are hidden in imponderable soil.

The origin of culture is, according to Bachofen, found in earth religions. The earth, as soil, is both the medium/container of plants and their life giver, supplying nourishment to the roots. It is the chthonic orientation of the archetypical Orient that provides the link between the Orient and the peasantry. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the notion of origin as source (in the meaning of spring of rejuvenation), which is already found in the writing of the romantics, is given new emphasis. My contention is that the revolution in the hierarchy of sound – advocated by Schering and Gurlitt – is linked with a reevaluation of the hierarchy of ideas contained within Bachofen's distinction between the chthonic and the uranian.

### **The earth and the heaven in Schering's "Klangstile"**

Schering uses earth and heaven metaphors on several occasions in "Klangstile". An instance of the earth metaphor is found in his distinction between "den erdennahen Klang einer barocken Orgel" as

opposed to “dem erdenfernen einer romantischen.”<sup>122</sup> It is not immediately evident from the context why Schering chooses to describe sonic qualities in terms of distance to earth. He continues by suggesting that the differences in organ sound might indicate corresponding divergences in the religious experience of baroque and romantic Protestantism, although he declares that the question should be left to the theologians to answer.<sup>123</sup>

The earth and heaven metaphors are applied in such a manner that they relate to the two opposing sound styles in a predictable pattern. The earthbound (*erdennahen*) sound of the baroque organ refers to qualities pertaining to cleaved sound. Conversely, expressions denoting a distance or detachment to earth or the world (e. g. *Erdenferne*, *Weltflucht*) are consistently used in connection with the ideal of sound-fusion. As we saw earlier, Schering regards the music of Palestrina as the culmination of the 16<sup>th</sup> century ideal of sound-fusion. Consistent with the pattern of use of the earth/world-metaphors, Schering describes his music as “das Symbol einer Kunst, die gänzlich auf erhabene Ruhe und Erdenferne hinweist, nicht aufregt, sondern zur Andacht stimmt.”<sup>124</sup> The reference to appeasement and devotional tuning is delivered in a religiously colored terminology inherited from a Christian discourse. *Erdenferne*, literally “earth-remoteness”, seems at first sight to be connoting otherworldliness, in the sense of the devotional (or monastic) life or the afterlife. If read in the context of traditional Christian discourse, the qualities Schering attributes to the music of Palestrina seem to be referring to desirable traits. However, behind the similarities in surface terminology, a revolution in the hierarchy of values has occurred. Rather than signifying otherworldliness in the Christian/religious sense, the expression “earth-remoteness” seems to suggest a kind of escapism. In Schering’s secularized reinterpretation of devotional attunement, the emphasis is on what is negated. The otherworldly is interpreted as a withdrawal from the world (and all what it signifies), and ultimately as a denial of life in the Nietzschean sense.

Man kann sagen, daß mit dem Grade der Klangverschmelzung – das scheint tief in der Verwandtschaft der Klangwelt mit unserer Seele zu liegen – unsere Passivität gegenüber allem von außen Heranstrebenden wächst, als ob wir uns in einer anderen Welt befänden. Die oft ausgesprochene Behauptung, den Romantiker zeichne ein

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122 Arnold Schering 1928, “Historische und nationale Klangstile“, p. 42.

123 Ibid., p. 43.

124 Ibid., p. 36.

gewisser Hang zur Weltflucht aus, ist nicht ohne Berechtigung.; denn die Sendung dieser Art von Kunst scheint darin zu liegen, das Leben, wie es auch sei, um jeden Preis zu vergolden.<sup>125</sup>

The revolution in sound is formulated as a Copernican one. Schering interprets the recent events in music history – in particular the popularity of jazz among youths<sup>126</sup> – as a return to the pre-Copernican sonic paradigm, with the earth providing the perspective into the universe of sound. Although Schering assumes the posture of the disinterested historian, he does – if not explicitly then at least through the value-ladenness of his terminology – appear as a supporter of the ongoing sonic revolution.

While expressions like earth-remoteness and related terminology signify a passive attitude towards the enviroing world, the corresponding expression of the earthbound/earth-closeness (*erdennahen*) takes on a meaning akin to English expressions like “earthly” or “down to earth”. These are qualities that resemble the aesthetics ideals of the so-called “New Objectivity” (*Neue Sachlichkeit*), which at the time of the publication of “Klangstile” enjoyed a widespread popularity in Germany. According to Gustav Hartlaub, who is usually credited with the invention of the term, New Objectivity “expressed itself in the enthusiasm for the immediate reality as a result of the desire to take things entirely objectively on a material basis without immediately investing them with ideal implications.”<sup>127</sup> The aesthetics of New Objectivity corresponded to a more wide reaching tendency within Weimar culture, in which “romantic escapism” in the arts was interpreted as symptom of a more fundamental deficiency in modern culture. The aesthetics of New Objectivity connect with a broader change in cultural values characterized by an emphasis on pragmatism over idealism, action over speculation, body over mind, and so on. The remedy was often identified with qualities stereotypically attributed to Anglo-American culture, and especially the modern American business-oriented society.<sup>128</sup> According to the ideas current in Germany at the time, the American way was characterized by pragmatism, on getting things done and earning money, rather than

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125 Ibid., p. 39.

126 Ibid., p. 38.

127 Gustav Hartlaub quoted in, Peter Gay 2001, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, p. 122.

128 Dennis Crockett 1999, *German Post-Expressionism: The Art of the Great Disorder, 1918-1924*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park (Pennsylvania), pp. 1-2.

immersing oneself in high flying speculations, which – as a stereotypical German trait – often was given the blame for Germany’s misfortunes. This pragmatist anti-romantic ethos resounds in Schering’s account of the musical baroque, which he sets up as contrast to romanticism. “Anders dagegen unsere Einstellung zum Barock. Wie reißen Schütz, Bach, Händel uns Takt für Takt zu Mittätigkeit und angespannter Aufmerksamkeit hin! [...] Wir haben weder Zeit, auszuruhen, noch Gelegenheit, uns in romantische Kontemplation zu versenken.”<sup>129</sup> “Romantic contemplation” is here portrayed as in conflict with attending to the world with a participatory and attentive attitude. Schering’s emphasis on music’s ability to rouse (reißen) the listener into participation and attention brings him in conflict with the ideal of aesthetic contemplation as expressed in the aesthetics of Eduard Hanslick.<sup>130</sup>

However, the context of New Objectivity, with its calls for sobriety, modesty, and action cannot fully explain Schering’s use of the earth metaphors. Earth seems to be part of a greater complex of ideas in which the Orient assumes an important position, and where action, vitality and life are more strongly emphasized than sobriety and modesty.

Wir fanden und dürfen es aus der Erfahrung mit den Wirkungen der jüngsten Musik heraus für gewiß erachten, daß Musik, die den gespaltenen Klang als Norm anerkennt und demgemäß scharf und durchdringend tönende Instrumente bevorzugt, in hohem Maße erregend, anreizend, beunruhigend wirkt. Es mag das daran liegen, daß dieser Art von Musik etwas Ursprüngliches, Primitives anhaftet, etwas von jener elementaren Lebensäußerung, aus der heraus ihr Urbild, die orientalische Heterophonie, entstanden war. Sie hat etwas völlig Unsentimentales, Aggressives und schreckt selbst vor ästhetischen Bedenklichkeiten nicht zurück. Wie im alten Ägypten mit Anbruch des Neuen Reichs, also nach der Herrschaft der Hyksos, durch asiatischen Einfluß das noch im Mittleren Reich herrschende Verschmelzungsideal zugunsten des andern zurückgedrängt wurde, indem zu den Harfen und Flöten leidenschaftlich und hell tönende Rohrblattinstrumente, Kastagnetten, Trommeln u. dgl. kamen, und wie man für

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129 Arnold Schering 1928, “Historische und nationale Klangstile“, p. 39.

130 In conformity with Kant’s definition of the pathological, Hanslick repeatedly reprehends non-contemplative modes of music reception for being pathological. “Ein Erleiden unmotivirter ziel- und stoffloser Affecte durch eine Macht, die in keinem Rapport zu unserm Wollen und Denken steht, ist des Menscheingesistes unwürdig.“ Eduard Hanslick 1990, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, p. 133.

die Zeit der Entstehung der gotischen Musik einen starken Einschluß orientalischen Geistes annehmen muß, so zeigt die Gegenwart mit ihrem Liebäugeln mit exotischer, insbesondere der Negermusik, den engen Zusammenhang dieses Klangtyps mit dem Empfinden von geistig noch unverbrauchten Völkern und Rassen. Bevor er freilich von einem Volke, einer Generation Besitz ergreift, muß bereits eine für ihn empfänglich gestimmte seelische Grundverfassung gegeben sein. Ob diese im vorliegenden Falle in einer enthusiastisch dem Leben und seiner Bejahung zugewandten Haltung zu erblicken ist oder – um mit Spengler zu reden – eine gewisse Weltangst als Triebfeder heftiger Aktionen enthält, möchte sich nicht ohne weiteres entscheiden lassen.<sup>131</sup>

The factor which binds together primitive peoples, the Orient, the middle ages and the German youth of the 1920s is their common inclination towards the cleaved sound style. The characteristic reception practices of jazz – e.g. the bodily participation in dance – are referred back to forces believed to be intrinsic to the cleaved sound style. It raises the listener to action and bodily movements and thus serves Schering's purpose, in the present context, to illustrate the vitalistic character of this sound style. The mentioning of the influx of Oriental spirit during the Gothic age (late middle ages) might be a reference to the theories of Josef Strzygowski, who around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had advanced the thesis that the artistic sources of the Gothic middle ages must be sought in the Orient.<sup>132</sup>

But is this shared inclination towards the cleaved sound style grounded in a common artistic volition, motivated in a shared worldview/spiritual orientation, binding the German youth to the primitives, Orientals and medieval man?

I take the reference to Spengler in the above quote to suggest a context in which an answer to this question might be sought. I will briefly outline Spengler's philosophy of culture with the purpose of showing just how it informs Schering's account of the cleaved sound style, and how it makes up an essential context for understanding just what is at stake in Schering's argument.

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131 Arnold Schering 1928, "Historische und nationale Klangstile", p. 38.

132 Talinn Grigor 2007, "Orient oder Rom? Qajar 'Aryan' Architecture and Strzygowski's Art History", *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 89, No. 3, p. 573.

## The Spenglerian context

Oswald Arnold Gottfried Spengler's (1880-1936) *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (2. vols. 1918 & 1922, from now on *Der Untergang*) was an immensely popular work during the interwar years, both in Germany and abroad. It was admired both for its author's encyclopedic grasp of history and philosophy as well as for its sheer literary qualities. Even commentators not convinced by Spengler's grand historical synthesis have acknowledged its literary merits. Alan Rowland Chisholm has described Spengler as "a poet rather than an ordinary scientist"<sup>133</sup>, and Northrop Frye has called *Der Untergang* "one of the world's great Romantic poems."<sup>134</sup> Spengler has been called one of "the fathers of multiculturalism".<sup>135</sup> His multiculturalism has roots back to Herder and the German romantics' rejection of universal history.

As noted by Northrop Frye, the "philosophical framework of Spengler's argument is a Romantic one".<sup>136</sup> Each culture is viewed as a unique organism, and its products – like legal codes, political organization, religion, works of art, and so on – are thought to reflect principles that are exclusive to the culture, and thus incongruous with those of other cultures. Although the contents of cultures are different, their development follows the same evolutionary pattern. Spengler's philosophy of culture is molded over the biological model of childhood, adolescence, maturity, old age, and eventual death. Occasionally he describes this process with seasonal metaphors, ranging from spring, summer, autumn to winter, while leaving out the cyclical return of spring. Even though every culture follows the same biologically derived pattern of evolution, each does so in ways specific to its inherent nature. Cultures share the same outer form in spite of their divergent inner content.

One of the notable elements of Spengler's philosophy is the distinction between culture and civilization. Culture is something other than states or historical people. Spengler claims that Western culture is already dead. Its death occurred in the final decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after which the West entered into the phase of civilization. While in the process of dying, cultures

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133 Alan Rowland Chisholm 1935, "Oswald Spengler and the Decline of the West", *The Australian Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 27, p. 36.

134 Northrop Frye 1974, "'The Decline of the West' by Oswald Spengler", *Daedalus*, Vol. 103, No. 1, p. 6.

135 John Farrenkopf 2000, "Spengler's Theory of Civilization", *Thesis Eleven*, Vol. 62, No. 1, p. 24.

136 Northrop Frye 1974, "'The Decline of the West' by Oswald Spengler", p. 1.

produce fossils in the form of “canons of art and science and political forms.”<sup>137</sup> Civilizations are thus built on the fossilized remains of dead cultures. The transformation from culture to civilization could be likened to a wet piece of clay drying in the sun. The simile serves to underline a central aspect of the distinction: the potential and malleable as opposed to the actual and stiff. Culture, especially in its early phases, signifies qualities like potentiality which in the phase of civilization have been transformed to determinate actuality. Culture and civilization therefore provide different frameworks for human actions. While culture facilitates a platform for activity and creativity (and all that which could be ordered under the banner of life), civilization discourages the same through the presence of an already established and determined actuality.

It seems evident that Spengler models his antithesis of culture and civilization on the principles expressed in the second law of thermodynamics.<sup>138</sup> Just like the physical universe (or any other closed system) evolves from a point of maximum potential energy towards the state of thermodynamic equilibrium, through which it is transformed to a dead desert of determinate actuality, cultural development follows the same route in its transformation of psychical energy towards the desert of the spirit.<sup>139</sup>

If we interpret Schering into this Spenglerian framework, we see how his ideas on the German youths’ embracing of sound types associated with the perception of “geistig noch unverbrauchten Völkern und Rassen”<sup>140</sup> seem to be based on the idea of a thermodynamics of the spirit. This reaching out towards reservoirs of life, inherent in the sound styles favored by the German youths, raises the question if it is possible to reverse the process of increasing entropy and to escape the fatalism inherent in this model? Is it possible to reawaken the dead culture hidden under the soil on which Western civilization is based?

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137 John J. Reilly 2003, “The World after Modernity”, *Comparative Civilizations Review*, No. 49, p. 124.

138 Spengler repeatedly suggests the notion of entropy as the principle of cultural decline throughout *Der Untergang*. “Die Kraft, der Wille hat ein Ziel, und wo es ein Ziel gibt, gibt es auch ein Ende. [...] Das Weltende als Vollendung einer innerlich notwendigen Entwicklung – das ist die Götterdämmerung; das bedeutet also, als letzte, als irreligiöse Fassung des Mythos, die Lehre von der Entropie.” Oswald Spengler 1920, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte, Erster Band: Gestalt und Wirklichkeit*, C. H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, München, p. 607.

139 The idea stands in the continuation of a 19th century tradition of applying physical principles, the thermodynamic laws in particular, to account for cultural or social laws. Greg Myers 1985, “Nineteenth-Century Popularizations of Thermodynamics and the Rhetoric of Social Prophecy”, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1. pp. 35-66.

140 Arnold Schering 1928, “Historische und nationale Klangstile“, p. 38.



## Wolfgang Graeser's *Körpersinn*

One of Schering's young colleagues, Wolfgang Graeser (1906-1928), would formulate an affirmative answer to this Spenglerian challenge in a book published under the title *Körpersinn* (1927) the year before Schering's "Klangstile". Despite his death at the early age of 21, Graeser managed to establish a reputation as a Bach-scholar. He is primarily remembered today for having rediscovered *Die Kunst der Fuge*, a work he studied extensively and prepared in a performance edition.<sup>141</sup> His study of the work was published as the first entry in *Das Bach-Jahrbuch* of 1924, directly followed by an article by Schering, who at the time was chief editor of the journal.<sup>142</sup> These circumstances do of course not prove that Schering had read or even knew about *Körpersinn*. It merely shows that the two writers must have been aware of each other as fellow Bach-scholars.

In the present context *Körpersinn* is interesting as an attempt to integrate Bachofen's chthonic-uranian dualism into a program of cultural reinvigoration with prominence given to music and dance. The context for Graeser's argument is provided by the cultural pessimism of Oswald Spengler, whose multicultural outlook Graeser adopts.<sup>143</sup>

Like Schering, Graeser takes the popularity of jazz among the youths as a sign of an ongoing cultural rejuvenation. He compares the importance of jazz music in the contemporary culture with that of the writings of the ancients during the renaissance. "Die Rhythmen der Neger haben ebenso wie in der Renaissance die Schriften der Griechen und Römer als der Funke gewirkt, der längst angesammelte Energien in uns selbst zur Explosion brachte."<sup>144</sup> Both the writings of the ancients and jazz music represent foreign cultural expressions, and can thus, following the Spenglerian logic in Graeser's argument, not be truly integrated into Western culture. Just as little as renaissance Europe could make the cultural products of the ancients their own, could jazz become the true expression of the European youth. Nevertheless, jazz, like the writings of the ancients in the renaissance, could serve as a means for awakening slumbering forces in Western culture back to

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141 Stephen Tunnicliffe 2000, "Wolfgang Graeser (1906-28): A Forgotten Genius", *The Musical Times*, Vol. 141, No. 1870, p. 42.

142 Schering had held the assignment as editor of *Das Bach-Jahrbuch* since its inception in 1904 and would continue to do so until 1939. Edith B. Schnapper 1980, "Schering, Arnold", p. 632.

143 Graeser has been described as "a protégé of Oswald Spengler." Karl Toepfer 1997, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 12.

144 Wolfgang Graeser 1930, *Körpersinn: Gymnastik, Tanz, Sport, Zweite Unveränderte Auflage*, C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, München, p. 112.

life. Graeser identifies the true expression of Western rhythm in the music of the medieval era. “Man braucht sich nur der Musik des Mittelalters und der gotischen Mehrstimmigkeit anzunehmen, um zu erfahren, was abendländischer Rhythmus gewesen ist, und welche Verkümmernung ihm gegenüber der rationale Takt verstandsbeherrschter späterer Zeiten bedeutete.”<sup>145</sup> The process of reclaiming Western rhythm will involve facing the chthonic forces of origin contained within “the dark middle ages” as the first youthful phase in Western culture, as “die Zeit des chthonischen, mütterlichen Prinzips”.<sup>146</sup>

Das Schlagwort des ‘dunklen Mittelalters’, es ist nicht sinnlos, wenn man es nicht in der üblichen albernen Weise versteht. Dieses Mittelalter, es hat noch etwas von dem Ungeformten, Chaotischen, Weiblichen der archaischen Zeiten an sich, es ist wahrhaftig die Finsternis, die sich das Licht gebär, unintellektuell, grausam, fanatisch, weich und schwärmend. Pflanzen sind diese gotischen Bauwerke, aufgesprungen aus der Urmutter Erde.<sup>147</sup>

The chthonic darkness of European culture had to yield to the uranian light during the renaissance.

Und das Licht brach an: die Renaissance. Es schien ein fremdes Licht zu sein, das Licht der Griechen und ihrer uranischen Kultur, aber das fremde Licht entzündete das *eigene*. [...] Die Renaissance ist der Zustand des Erwachens, der Übergang von der chthonischen Kultur zur uranischen. [...] Nicht mehr die Erde war der Bezugspunkt des kosmischen Weltsystems, sondern die Sonne.<sup>148</sup>

The Copernican revolution becomes a symbol of a more fundamental revolution of culture heralded by the renaissance. In terms of spiritual orientation, this revolution involved the replacement of the

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145 Ibid., p. 111.

146 Ibid., pp. 28-29

147 Ibid., p. 29.

148 Ibid., pp. 30-31.

chthonic outlook with that of the uranian, metaphorically conceived as a substitution of the dark middle ages for enlightened modernity.

The notion of “the dark ages” stems from medieval time itself, where it was used, as Theodore E. Mommsen writes, “to contrast the light, which Christ had brought into this world, with the darkness in which the heathen had languished before His time.”<sup>149</sup> During the 14<sup>th</sup> century the terminology would reappear within a secular framework. Now it was the ancients that were the bearers of light, with special reference to the sphere of art and letters, in contrast to the darkness of the intermediate centuries since the fall of Rome. The poet and scholar Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) seems to be the first to have used the term in this secularized fashion, and then with a specific reference to what he saw as the decay in Latin writing.

It is this detachment from the light of the ancients, used as symbol for the more general and transcultural principle of the uranian, which Graeser evokes in his reference to the dark middle ages. In Graeser’s narrative the metaphors of the light and darkness of the ages have undergone a revaluation through their integration into a Bachofian-Spenglerian historical framework. “Darkness” has now acquired connotations of life, youth, and potentiality, as opposed to the stiff, fossilized, determinate actuality of enlightened civilization. The possibility of regression, back into darkness, to the rejuvenating sources of culture, is presented as a way of escaping from the organic determinism inherent in Spengler’s fatalistic philosophy of culture.

## **Oriental Germany**

In 1928, the year of the publication of Schering’s “Klangstile”, the former German emperor Wilhelm II – himself a student of orientalist literature – reported in a letter to a friend of a recent conversation with Oswald Spengler. Wilhelm wrote that he had objected to Spengler’s cultural pessimism by stating that “we” are Orientals (*Morgenländer*) not Westerners (*Abendländer*).<sup>150</sup> What this “we” exactly contains is not clear from Suzanne Marchand’s recounting of the letter. However, one might be permitted to interpret it as a reference to the German nation. A context for the statement could possibly be found in the complex of ideas linking the Orient to the chthonic,

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149 Theodore E. Mommsen 1942, “Petrarch’s conception of the ‘Dark Ages’”, *Speculum*, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 227.

150 Suzanne Marchand 2001, “German Orientalism and the Decline of the West”, p. 472.

and thus to the vitality of the soil, to rebirth, action, etc., that is, qualities that stand counter to Spengler's diagnosis of the old, tired and paralyzed West.

The image of the Oriental or primitive Germany is evoked in the last part of "Klangstile" where Schering compares the peculiarities of what he calls the "national sound styles" (*nationale Klangstile*) of England, Germany and France. Even though the music histories of these nations belong to a common European tradition, and thus subject to the changes in historical sound styles, Schering argues that one could observe an transhistorical inclination towards the one or the other sound style in each of the mentioned nations. He finds a German leaning towards the ideal of cleaved sound style, which he suggests might be due to the peculiar cultural conditions in Germany, compared to the other major nations of Western Europe.

Dem aufgeregten Protestantismus der frühen Aufklärung steht ein ruhiger, selbstsicherer Katholizismus gegenüber. So wird in Deutschland aller kräftiger, bildlicher, unruhiger, sinnfälliger gegeben, weil nie der Zusammenhang mit dem Einfachen, Primitiven der Volksseele verlorengehen soll. Deshalb haben auch weder Italien, noch Frankreich und England das deutsche Barockorchester in seiner ganzen vielseitigen Klanggewalt angenommen.<sup>151</sup>

Schering finds this relative proximity of the Germans to the primitive sources of culture expressed in the close ties between the German elite (for whom the artistic music was composed) and the people, compared to the more closed aristocracy of England: "Dem vorwiegend aufs Milde, Ruhige gestimmten Klangideal der Engländer hat Deutschland in älterer Zeit ein härteres entgegengestellt, wohl weil hier die führenden Männer mehr aus dem Volke aufstiegen und zeitlebens mehr für dies als für eine Bildungsaristokratie geschrieben haben."<sup>152</sup> If we relate the opposition to the 19<sup>th</sup> century philologists' division of the Greek world, the Englishmen have taken on the role of the Athenians, while the Germans have taken the place of the orientally inclined Boeotians.<sup>153</sup>

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151 Arnold Schering 1928, "Historische und nationale Klangstile", p. 41.

152 Ibid.

153 I have not been able ascertain that there has existed an established tradition for comparing Germans with the Boeotians. However, one example is to be found in Carl Daub's (1765-1836) *System der theologischen Moral* (published posthumously 1841), where the "temperamentum terrestre" also designated "das Bäuerisch-Böotische" is

## Summary

While “Musikhören” is structured on a rather conventional music historical narrative redressed in a new terminology and with explanatory devices borrowed from art history, “Klangstile” represents a radical reconceptualization of music history signaled through the application of a circular model. The basic idea in the latter text is that music history could be written in terms of a continuous undulation between two principles of sonic organization: cleaved sound and sound-fusion. The first is based on the principle of heterogeneity, where the elementary components of sound retain their individuality in the sonic texture; the latter is based on the principle of homogeneity, in which the sub-elements of sound are deprived their individuality in favor of a homogeneously sounding composite of more or less indistinguishable elements. The cleaved sound style is defined on the basis of medieval and baroque music, as well as the popular music of the German youths at the time (primarily jazz). The defining traits of sound-fusion are derived from the music of the high renaissance as well as the classical-romantic tradition (ca. 1750-1900).

There is a revival thesis contained in the circular conception of music history presented in “Klangstile”. In “Musikhören” Schering voiced his doubt about the possibility (or even the desirability) of making medieval music part of contemporary musical life. Medieval music was referred to a position outside of the family of modern music, similar to how ancient music was treated in romantic music historiography. He does however, interestingly, make exceptions for certain kinds of medieval music supposedly more popular (e.g. monophonic songs). In “Klangstile” the medieval age attains a central role in the music historical narrative, through being situated at the position within the circle of recurrences corresponding to that of the emerging “new age”.

Both texts connect music to an overarching cultural superstructure with the help of the concept of artistic volition. Although the term is not used in “Klangstile” it is evident that Schering’s investigations proceed from a similar notion of a link between aesthetic perception and the “worldview” or “spiritual orientation” of the culture. If anything, the link between culture and music is even more pronounced in “Klangstile” than in the earlier text, as it now appears in the

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mentioned among the fundamental temperaments of man. The temperament is derived from what Daub views as the core traits of the Boeotians: “sie waren Bauern und so mit dem Felde das sie bauten, mit der Erde wie verwachsen, ruhig, friedlich, nicht nach Außen strebend. [...] Dieses Temperament finden wir hauptsächlich bei den Deutschen. [...] Der deutsche Bauer ist gleich dem Böötier. Daß wir dieses Temperament besonders seit der Reformation in Schranken hielten, verkennt die Geschichte nicht.“ Carl Daub 1841, *System der theologischen Moral, Zweiter Theil, Erste Abtheilung*, Marheineke & Dittenberger (eds.), Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, Berlin, p. 148.

context of a revivalist thesis. I have argued that the revival thesis is advanced within a discourse on cultural revitalization, which, although it is not directly expressed, could nonetheless be inferred from the discursive field through which Schering's investigation travels. His reference to the Orient, as well as his use of oppositions like earth and heaven (or earthbound and far from earth), and activity as opposed to passivity, both of which are aligned with the musically derived opposition of cleaved sound and sound-fusion, all points towards an underlying discourse on cultural crisis and revitalization. Schering's and Gurlitt's transvaluation of the sonic values of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is thus linked with the idea that the inherited values are both symptoms and causes of the crisis, and that revitalization hinges on a revaluation in which the life-affirming and life-denying forces of culture and sound are recognized as such.



## Chapter 5

### Heinrich Bessler: autonomous and colloquial listening

This chapter will focus on Heinrich Bessler's article "Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens" (1926, from now on "Grundfragen"), which was published in the 1925 edition of *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters*. The published article is a revised version of his habilitation lecture delivered in Freiburg on 3 November 1925.

It is a condensed text, where many different elements intermingle so as to make it difficult to determine just what the primary subject is. Is it an attempt to lay the groundwork for a history of listening or a sociology of music reception? Or is it an attempt to fashion an aesthetic theory on the basis of Heideggerian phenomenology? Or should it primarily be read as a polemical work and a damaging critique of the ideal of aesthetic autonomy and the musical institutions of early 20<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois culture?

This many-sidedness of "Grundfragen" has also manifested itself in a quite varied reception history. Although the title indicates that the fundamental issues of listening are the subject matter, it is far from obvious what these fundamental issues are, or if listening in the end is the subject of epistemic priority. It has nevertheless been described as "[t]he first serious challenge to [the] assumption [that the aural perception of music does not change over the course of history]".<sup>1</sup> It attains a seminal status in Rob C. Wegman's study on the interwar scholarly research on the history of listening, "'Das Musikalische Hören' in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Perspectives from

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<sup>1</sup> Nikolaus Bacht 2010, "Introduction", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, vol. 135, No. 1 (Special Issue: Listening: Interdisciplinary Perspectives), p. 1.



Pre-War Germany” (1998). Unlike some other commentators,<sup>2</sup> Wegman is careful to distinguish between “Grundfragen” and Bessler’s post war writings, the most prominent being *Das Musikalische Hören der Neuzeit* (1959). Wegman finds the latter “symptomatic of the very problem he had so courageously diagnosed in 1925”,<sup>3</sup> and maintains that it could well be described as “essentially a history of style, interlaced with inferences about modes of listening appropriate to each style phase.”<sup>4</sup> Wegman reprehends *Das Musikalische Hören der Neuzeit* and other of Bessler’s later writings on listening and associated topics for merely containing “faint echoes of the radicalism he had expressed in the 1920s.”<sup>5</sup>

Although Wegman expresses admiration for the radicalism expressed in Bessler’s “Grundfragen”, he also takes a critical stance towards some of the ideas expressed in it. This is illustrated in his comments on Bessler’s use of the expression *Kollektivdasein* in relation to dance, which, as Wegman derides, “seems to stand for a rather idealized, almost fairy-tale state of musicianship in the German countryside, unspoilt by modern society and ironically transcending history in much the same way as music listening had done in Riemann’s theory.”<sup>6</sup> The allusion to Hugo Riemann refers to the fact that Bessler begins “Grundfragen” with an attack on Riemann’s approach to the topic of listening, as presented in Riemann’s doctoral dissertation *Ueber das musikalische Hören* (1873, publ. 1874). However, Bessler’s critique is not, as Wegman’s remark seems to suggest, directed against the ahistorical nature of Riemann’s investigations per se. Bessler’s critique is specifically directed at what he sees as Riemann’s conflation of the fundamental issue of listening with the principles of classical-romantic harmonic theory. One cannot infer from this that Bessler as a consequence should subscribe to a historically relativistic notion of listening. It is far from evident that history, or listening for that matter, stands at the centre of Bessler’s investigation.

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2 Texts that aligns “Grundfragen” with Bessler’s postwar writings include: Wolfgang Dömling 1975, “‘Die kranken Ohren Beethovens’ oder Gibt es eine Geschichte des musikalischen Hörens?“, pp. 188-192.; Bernhard Dopheide 1978, *Musikhören – Hörerziehung*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, pp. 13-27.; Andrew Bowie 2007, *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 292-308.

3 Rob C. Wegman 1998, “‘Das Musikalische Hören’ in the Middle Ages and Renaissance”, p. 445.

4 Ibid., p. 444.

5 Ibid., p. 441.

6 Ibid., p. 439.

Another important strain in the reception history of “Grundfragen” is to read it in context of the musical aesthetic of interwar Germany, and in particular in relation to the concept of utility music (*Gebrauchsmusik*).<sup>7</sup> Although the term *Gebrauchsmusik* was not coined by Besseler, he has been credited with being “the first to employ it as an important theoretical concept”,<sup>8</sup> and integrating it into a comprehensively conceived settlement with the idea of aesthetic autonomy.

A further tendency has been to focus on Besseler’s links with the philosopher Martin Heidegger.<sup>9</sup> Besseler studied philosophy under Heidegger as a secondary subject in Freiburg, and he acknowledges his debt to his former teacher in a footnote in “Grundfragen”.<sup>10</sup> His distinction between “everydayness” and “the aesthetic attitude” could be related to Heideggerian philosophy, but it might also, as I will argue below, be grounded in a totally different source. Richard Taruskin writes that “Besseler’s misreading of his philosophy professor was overdetermined, responsive not only to the perceived implications of Heidegger’s thought, but to many other stimuli from what we now call ‘Weimar culture.’”<sup>11</sup> I will follow up on Taruskin’s observation and look for other possible influences within the intellectual context of Weimar Germany.

More recently Matthew Pritchard has argued that “Grundfragen” should be interpreted as an attempt to refute claims made for the symphonic concert’s ability to promote communal sentiments. “Besseler’s principal target in ‘Grundfragen’ [...] was not primarily Riemann or the ‘aesthetics of autonomy’ [...] but the apparently disintegrating credibility of traditional social arguments made on behalf of the concert.”<sup>12</sup> I agree with Pritchard’s conclusion that Besseler’s most fundamental concern is the social forces in music making and reception. However, I will argue that Besseler’s targeting of that which Pritchard labels under the designation “aesthetics of autonomy” is integrated into his sociological critique of the concert. Besseler’s idea is that the autonomous work object

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7 Stephen Hinton 1989, *The Idea of Gebrauchsmusik: A Study of Musical Aesthetics in the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) with Particular Reference to the Works of Paul Hindemith*, Garland Publishing, New York, pp. 5-21.

8 Ibid., p. 5.

9 Ibid., pp. 11-15.; Stephen Hinton 1995, “Gebrauchsmusik”, in Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (ed.), *Terminologie der Musik im 20. Jahrhundert*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, p. 166.; Andrew Bowie 2007, *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity*, pp. 292-308.

10 Heinrich Besseler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, in Rudolf Schwartz (ed.), *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters für 1925*, Verlag von C. F. Peters, Leipzig, p. 45 n1.

11 Richard Taruskin 2009, *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 392.

12 Matthew Pritchard 2011, “Who Killed the Concert? Heinrich Besseler and the Inter-War Politics of Gebrauchsmusik”, *Twentieth-Century Music*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 44.

comes into view within the aesthetic attitude, which at the same time constitutes the recipient as an autonomous listener, that is, autonomous in a sociological sense: self-determined but also ultimately lonely – standing alone. I will argue that Bessler's ideas on the sociologically derived listener are based on a theory on the sociological constitution of subjectivity, developed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

I will start out by outlining Bessler's distinction between colloquial and autonomous listening and the interrelationship between the two modes of listening and utility music (*Gebrauchsmusik*) and concert music respectively. In the second part I will contextualize Bessler's distinction between colloquial and autonomous listening in relation to a discourse on social cohesion with roots back into the social philosophy of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. I will argue that Ferdinand Tönnies distinction between community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*) provides the paradigm for the kind of dualism on which Bessler's distinction between colloquial and autonomous listening is structured. The final section of the chapter will focus on the last part of "Grundfragen", where Bessler sketches out a history of listening, based on the earlier developed distinction between colloquial and autonomous modes of listening. I will supplement this rudimentary history of listening presented in "Grundfragen" with an analogous account given in another article published the same year under the title "Erläuterungen zu einer Vorführung Ausgewählter Denkmäler der Musik des Späten Mittelalters".

## Biography

Heinrich Bessler (1900-1969) studied musicology under Wilibald Gurlitt, Guido Adler and Wilhelm Fischer at the universities of Freiburg (Gurlitt) and Vienna, as well as philosophy as a secondary subject under Martin Heidegger (Freiburg). In 1923 he obtained his doctorate at Freiburg with a dissertation on the German suite in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Two years later he completed his habilitation the same place. In 1928 he moved to a post at the University of Heidelberg. After the war he held professorships at Jena (1948) and Leipzig (1956). His main area of research was early music (medieval and renaissance), but he also made contributions to the study of J. S. Bach and musical aesthetics. International fame was reached with the publication of *Die Musik des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (1931), which, as has been remarked, "for the first time placed

music history within the history of ideas.”<sup>13</sup> His affiliation with NSDAP – which after the war led to his dismissal at Heidelberg – has been well documented in later years by scholars like Anselm Gerhard and Thomas Schipperges.<sup>14</sup>

## The autonomous and the colloquial

As mentioned, I take the issue of the social forces in music making and reception to be the subject of foremost priority in “Grundfragen”. Besseler proceeds from the presumption that some forms of music reception assist in the forming and strengthening of community (*Gemeinschaft*) while other forms of reception discourage community. The institution of the classical concert is seen as the main propagator of the community-destroying forces in contemporary music life. The principle of reception on which the concert is based is what Besseler labels “autonomous listening” (*eigenständigen Hören*). The counter-category to autonomous listening is made up of the colloquial forms of listening (*umgangsmäßigen Hörformen*).<sup>15</sup> Besseler proceeds from the conviction that listening has a constitutive effect on the music being listened to. Autonomous listening corresponds to autonomous music, while colloquial forms of listening correspond to what he calls utility music (*Gebrauchsmusik*). The constitutive power of listening over the music being listened to is based on the fact that the two modes of listening are defined, not primarily as psychological processes, but as fundamental modes of approaching/accessing music.

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13 Lothar Hoffmann-Erbrecht 1980, “Besseler, Heinrich“, in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians*, Vol. 2, Macmillan Publishers Limited, London, p. 660.

14 Anselm Gerhard 2002, “Musikwissenschaft“, in Frank-Rutger Hausmann (ed.), *Die Rolle der Geisteswissenschaften im Dritten Reich 1933-1945*, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, München, pp. 168-172.; Thomas Schipperges 2005, *Die Akte Heinrich Besseler: Musikwissenschaft und Wissenschaftspolitik in Deutschland 1924 bis 1949*, Strube, München.

15 In the translation provided by Matthew Pritchard and Irene Auerbach, *umgangsmäßig* is variously translated as “everyday” or “functional”. (Their choice of translation is explained in a footnote to the text: Heinrich Besseler 2011, “Fundamental Issues of Musical Listening”, Matthew Pritchard & Irene Auerbach (trans.), *Twentieth-Century Music*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 60 n18.). I have chosen the term “colloquial” in order to underline an in this context central feature of its sociological demarcation towards the autonomous. *Umgangsmäßigen Hören*, as Besseler uses it, invokes connotation of proximity and informality, both among interacting members present in the music as well as in the relation between listener and music. The colloquial listener approaches music “wie man mit Dingen des täglichen Gebrauchs umgeht, ohne zuvor eine Distanz überwinden [...]” (Heinrich Besseler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, p. 45). This mode of approach contrasts to the highly formalized structures of the classical concert, manifested in the autonomous listener’s distancing both of the musical object as well as fellow listeners.

Wenn in diesem Zusammenhang das zentrale Problem des Hörens herausgegriffen wird, so darf es sich nicht darum handeln, gewisse künstlich isolierte Vorgänge psychologisch zu untersuchen. Die Frage ist vielmehr, in welchen Weisen uns Musik im allgemeinen *zugänglich* wird oder werden kann. Jede derartige Zugangsmöglichkeit muß sich naturgemäß auch in bestimmten gesellschaftlichen Formationen ausprägen, und gerade dort wird ein Wandel am unzweideutigsten hervortreten.<sup>16</sup>

Bessler thus discards the whole psycho-physiological tradition, which at least since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century had provided musicology with a scientific basis.<sup>17</sup> When Bessler begins “Grundfragen” with an attack on Riemann’s dissertation *Über das musikalische Hören*, it is this tradition of approaching the question of listening with the expectation that it should be resolved with reference to the physiology and psychology of sense perception, which he is confronting head on. Bessler’s aim is to reformulate the fundamental issues of listening, so that they come into view as sociological rather than psycho-physiological problems.

When defining the classical concert from the sociological viewpoint, Bessler finds that it is characterized by an advanced form of differentiation of labor.<sup>18</sup> The composer is given the creative task, while professional musicians are used as tools of reproduction, and the audience is reduced to mere listeners (*Zuhörern*). Another characteristic of the concert is the limiting of the social space. From the perspective of the listener, the fellow listeners of the audience disappear from the horizon of conscious attention. Attention is instead exclusively directed towards the music being presented, which consequently appears as an autonomous work object.

Autonomous listening involves a removal of the music out of the everyday context, i.e. making it stand out as autonomous, as well as a corresponding removal of the listener from the everyday world. The autonomous work object is conditioned on an equally autonomous listening subject: the lonely one, standing alone, withdrawn from the world of everyday projects and

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16 Heinrich Bessler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, p. 36.

17 Herman Helmholtz’s *Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen* (1863) is the founding text of this modern psycho-physiological tradition, in which the author connects aesthetics and music theory to the hard science of the physiology of aural sense.

18 Heinrich Bessler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, p. 36.

interactions. Besseler's analysis of the concert endeavor to show that autonomous listening is connected with social atomization. His sociological analysis of the concert seems to be under the influence of views developed within the German Youth Movement. In a text published the year prior to "Grundfragen", Hilmar Höckner, a writer closely associated with the Youth Movement, describes the concert listener in terms analogous to those of Besseler. "[K]eine Brücke [...] verbindet ihn in höherem Sinn mit denen, die neben und um ihn herum sitzen: den auch sie sind in sich selbst verfangen, einsam im Genießen und Schwelgen. 'Publikum', das ist die zusammenhanglose Masse einzelner."<sup>19</sup> The fact that Höckner's text is mentioned by Besseler in a footnote indicates that Besseler was acquainted with the music-theoretical writings of the Youth Movement. I will be returning to the Youth Movement below.

Besseler warns of a recent influx of what he calls the concert-determined properties (*konzerthaften Eigenschaften*) into fields of musical life that:

ursprünglich von anderen Kräften getragen wurden. Sie hat in der Kammermusik die technischen Ansprüche der führenden Werke auf ein Spezialistenniveau emporgeschaubt, auf die Kirchenchöre übergegriffen, gesellschaftliche Musizierformen wie die Männergesang verfälscht, die Tanz- und Gebrauchsmusik aus dem ästhetischen Bewußtsein so gut wie weggestrichen und das Volkslied zu einer Angelegenheit von Historikern und Ethnologen gemacht.<sup>20</sup>

Under the influence of the concert ideal, these musical institutions have seen a progressive removal, or at last narrowing, of the social space which formerly had nourished them, and replaced it with aesthetical ideals. In order to understand the nature of this development, one should, Besseler asserts, look towards the new technologies of sound reproduction, where the concert-principle of aesthetic autonomy has been drawn to its logical conclusion.<sup>21</sup> Radio technology destroys the bodily-spatial dimension by disseminating the musical performance to an audience isolated in their

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19 Hilmar Höckner 1925, "Musik und Gemeinschaft", in Josef Ludwig Fischer & Ludwig Lade (eds.), *Deutsche Musikpflege*, Verlag des Bühnenvolksbundes G. m. b. H., Frankfurt a. M., p. 2.

20 Heinrich Besseler 1926, "Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens", pp. 36-37

21 Ibid., p. 37.

own homes and scattered over a vast area far surpassing the sonic limits of the traditional arenas of musical performance. The gramophone does away with the temporal dimension as well. It allows the listener to play the music at home whenever he likes. With the help of these new technologies of reproduction, music has been given the opportunity to present itself in an unambiguous fashion as a purely sonic object for aesthetic contemplation. The social nature of music making and reception is erased from popular imagination together with the spatial dimension on which it depended. Besseler is careful to underline that these technologies of musical reproduction are the offspring of the concert, and therefore not an inevitable outcome of the technological possibilities themselves. In other words, the reason why radio and gramophone have integrated so seamlessly into contemporary musical life is because they present music in a concert-like fashion: as pure sonic objects for aesthetic contemplation. “Für die abendländische Musik ist er die letzte, logische Konsequenz, nachdem das Konzert die leiblich-räumliche Verbundenheit bereits auf ein Mindestmaß beschränkt hat.”<sup>22</sup>

In his magnum opus *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan famously likened the radio to the tribal drum, with an emphasis on its ability to invoke profound archaic forces within the members of nations that (unlike the Anglo-Americans) were oriented towards the non-visual (i.e. the audible and tactile).<sup>23</sup> The use of the radio in National Socialist propaganda provided McLuhan with the paradigmatic case. His assertion that the German mind displays more archaic features (which in the realm of the senses correspond to an orientation towards the audible and tactile) is ultimately derived from an early 20<sup>th</sup> century German discourse on “Germanness” manifested in expressions like the German “Sonderweg” or “die verspätete Nation”.<sup>24</sup> However, McLuhan’s description of the radio as a tool for invoking tribal sentiments is at odds with how the new medium was perceived by Besseler, as well as several of the leading voices of the musical branch of the German Youth Movement. The radio (as the gramophone) was consistently described as both a symptom of and a tool for increasing social atomization, and not suitable for the purpose of strengthening their ideal community, which one might well describe as “tribal” in McLuhan’s sense. Hilmar Höckner contemptuously write about “der retardierende und zerstörende Einfluß

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22 Heinrich Besseler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, p. 37.

23 Marshall McLuhan 2003, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, Critical Edition*, W. Terrence Gordon (ed.), Gingko Press, Corte Madera, pp. 399-410.

24 For an assessment of the Sonderweg-debates, see: Jürgen Kocka 1982, “Der ‘deutsche Sonderweg’ in der Diskussion“, *German Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 365-379.

gewisser neuer und neuester technischer Errungenschaften auf dem Gebiete der Maschinenmusik und des Radiowesens.“<sup>25</sup> The arguably leading theoretician of the movement, Fritz Jöde, similarly attacks what he calls “Maschinenmusik” throughout his *Unser Musikleben*.<sup>26</sup>

## Gebrauchsmusik

The counterforce against the social atomization in musical life resides in what Besseler designates utility music (*Gebrauchsmusik*). The term *Gebrauchsmusik* is today typically associated with German interwar composers like Carl Orff, Kurt Weil, Hanns Eisler and in particular, Paul Hindemith – who some commentators have credited with coining the expression.<sup>27</sup> However, the term was first applied in a musicological context, and the priority of invention seems to belong to Paul Nettl (1889-1972), who introduced it in an article called “Beiträge zur Geschichte der Tanzmusik im 17. Jahrhundert” published in two parts in 1921 and 1922.<sup>28</sup> Nettl used the term for distinguishing music intended for dance from music not intended for dance (designated *Vortragsmusik*) despite displaying features derived from dance-forms (e.g. orchestral or solo instrumental suites).

According to Besseler the defining trait of utility music resides in the attitude of the listener. “[Die] Gebrauchsmusik [bildet] für ihn ein Gleichgeordnetes neben seiner sonstigen Tätigkeit, etwas, womit er umgeht, so wie man mit Dingen des täglichen Gebrauchs umgeht, ohne zuvor eine Distanz überwinden, nämlich in eine besondere ästhetische Einstellung übergehen zu müssen.“<sup>29</sup> Utility music thus appears as a consequence of the listeners refraining from entering the aesthetic attitude. The aesthetic attitude refers to a distanced-observing approach towards an object singled out for special attention among the things of the world, and thus refers to an essential trait of autonomous listening. The everyday attitude, which makes up the counter concept to the aesthetic,

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25 Hilmar Höckner 1925, “Musik und Gemeinschaft“, p. 7.

26 Fritz Jöde 1925, *Unser Musikleben: Absage und Beginn*, Julius Zwisslers Verlag, Wolfenbüttel. (see, for instance, p. 46).

27 Stephen Hinton 1989, *The Idea of Gebrauchsmusik*, p. 1.

28 Ibid., p. 3.

29 Heinrich Besseler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, pp. 45-46.



is defined negatively, as the refusal to give special attention to one thing, but rather remaining open towards the world.

By founding utility music upon the attitude of the listener, Bessler opens up the possibility that a variety of different styles and genres might serve as utility music. It also follows that the same music could be transported between the spheres of the everyday and the aesthetic, depending on the context of reception. However, Bessler believes that the listener, at least to a certain extent, is conditioned in the music itself. Certain stylistic features are taken as encouraging an entrance into the aesthetic attitude, while other features seem to suggest that the listener remains within the everyday attitude. As we shall see below, this idea provides Bessler with the methodological basis for his investigations into the history of listening.

In an article published the year after “Grundfragen” Bessler distinguishes between two forms of utility music: “bodily-rhythmical” and “word-attached” (*wortverhafteten*).<sup>30</sup> The distinction is already present in “Grundfragen” although not given as clear a definition as in the subsequent publication. The “word-attached” forms include national, political and religious songs, as well as other types of music whose force resides in the sung text. The listener is typically expected to sing along, and in so doing, sings himself into the community, be it religious, political, national or other kinds of (more or less) voluntary associations. Bessler illustrates the power inherent in such a “singing oneself into the community” by referring to the difficulty of sliding back into the aesthetic attitude after participating in the singing of the national anthem.

In den vergangenen Jahren geschah es öfter, daß ein Konzert oder eine Theateraufführung auf das Bekanntwerden einer politischen Nachricht hin durch gemeinsames Absingen der Nationalhymne unterbrochen wurde. Wer dergleichen einmal erlebt hat, weiß, daß es so gut wie unmöglich ist, nach einem derartigen Ausbruch sich wieder in die konzerthafte ästhetische Sammlung hineinzufinden. Der ganze Mensch ist plötzlich in Aufruhr geraten. Er ist in einer Tiefenschicht seines Daseins aufgewühlt, die jeder konzerthaften Musik unzugänglich bleibt.<sup>31</sup>

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30 Heinrich Bessler 1927, “Grundfragen der Musikästhetik“, in Rudolf Schwartz (ed.), *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters für 1926*, Verlag von C. F. Peters, Leipzig, p. 69.

31 Heinrich Bessler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, p. 42.

Although “the bodily-rhythmical forms” might also include music with sung texts, the essential factor is that the music addresses the body of the listener directly by inviting it to engage in its rhythmic movements. Its purpose is to fashion a strictly coordinated rhythmic environment where the audience can meet and interact with fellow listeners within the music. Music thus becomes a means for integrating the audience through immersion in sonic space. Besseler takes dance music to be the paradigmatic case of such bodily-rhythmical forms. He illustrates the immersive nature inherent in the bodily-rhythmical forms through the example of the dancer and the onlooker corresponding to the perspective positions vis-à-vis the music of the insider and the outsider. The dancer:

hört nicht zu, sondern verhält sich aktiv-ausströmend, ohne die Musik ausdrücklich als objektiv vorhanden zu nehmen. Sie ist für ihn gar nicht gegenständlich da. Und ähnlich wie hier zwischen Musik und Hörern eine uns gewohnte Distanz zu fehlen scheint, so verschmelzen auch die sonst fest umrissenen Einzelpersonen zu einer Art von rhythmisch-vitalem Kollektivdasein, durch das die Musik als verbindendes Fluidum hindurchströmt. Es liegt auf der Hand, daß ein bloßer Beobachter nicht den angemessenen Zugang zu dieser Musik hat, insofern er eben nicht ‘mitmacht’. Von Zuhören in konzerthaftem Sinne ist hier keine Rede. Man könnte das Leitenlassen der eigenen musikalisch-tänzerischen Aktivität allenfalls als *Mithören* bezeichnen.<sup>32</sup>

While the autonomous listener in the act of “outside listening” (*Zuhören*) addresses the work as a thing selected for contemplation among the things of the world, its antithesis, the “within listening” (*Mithören*) of the colloquial listener (in this case the dancer), does not address music as a thing at all. The autonomous listener creates a distance between the music and himself by taking refuge in the aesthetic attitude. Music is taken out of the flux of life and singled out for special attention, through which it attains properties of a thing/object of the world. In contrast, the colloquial listener remains within the everyday where music and world melt together and form the scenery within which the he for the moment lives his life.

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32 Heinrich Besseler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, p. 38.

The work song is another variety of the bodily-rhythmic forms. Unlike the paradigmatic forms of dance music, the work song is typically purely vocal music. However, the work song diverges from the above mentioned word-attached forms in that the semantics of the sung text are not essential for the accomplishing of its task. In his pioneering study on the work song, *Arbeit und Rhythmus* (1896), Karl Bücher had noted that “[die] Melodie jener [Arbeits-] Gesänge ist durchaus Nebensache, ebenso wie der Text, der manchmal bloss aus sinnlosen Worten und Ausrufen besteht [...]”.<sup>33</sup> Bücher later writes that the participants in primitive forms of work songs “wissen oft selber nicht anzugeben, was sie singen”.<sup>34</sup> The negligible importance given to the semantics of the words further illustrates the work song’s relative proximity to dance music compared to the word-attached forms. Its purpose is to coordinate the movement of the bodies present in sonic space, with a physically laborious project as focal point. Besseler describes it as one of the most primal/original modes of musicking.

Wegen seiner bedeutenden Rolle gerade im primitiven Leben erfordert das Arbeitslied unsere besondere Aufmerksamkeit, da die hier vorliegende Zugangsweise zur Musik zweifellos als eine der ursprünglichsten zu gelten hat. Die uns gewohnten Gegensätzlichkeiten von Aufführenden und Hörern, von Einzelem und Gemeinschaft treten hier noch gar nicht auf, sind nicht einmal keimhaft vorhanden.<sup>35</sup>

Some of the most fundamental divisions in contemporary musical life do not seem to apply to the work song. Performer and listener exist as an undifferentiated unity, and even the individual subject seems to melt into a joint body, oriented towards a common goal. The work song could be regarded both as a product of the rhythm of the work and as a means for coordinating the rhythm of the individual bodies to the supraindividual rhythm of the work. At this stage in the history of musicking neither performer and audience nor the individual and community are differentiated. This “primordial” listener is portrayed as a pre-subjective, pre-individualized performer-listener.

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33 Karl Bücher 1896, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, S. Hirzel, Leipzig, p. 32.

34 Ibid., p. 75.

35 Heinrich Besseler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, p. 40.

## Primitivism and fragmentation

Bessler's approving treatment of the different forms of utility music seems to be based on the conviction that they point towards a more primitive sphere of existence. "The primitive" does not refer back to a temporal point of origin or a phase of universal history, but rather to the basic structures of present practice: as the point of maximum unity between presently differentiated elements.

Wir gehen von der Gegenwart aus, wie sie uns *hic et nunc* umgibt, und suchen hier solche Erscheinungen auf, die sich von selbst 'primitiver' darstellen, als es im allgemeinen der gegenwärtigen Situation entspricht, d. h., deren geistige Haltung in eine geschlossenere, wenig differenzierte, rational weniger durchdringbare, ursprünglichere Daseinsstufe verweist.<sup>36</sup>

Bessler's emphasis on differentiation and rationalization calls to mind Max Weber's (1864-1920) theory of modernity. According to Weber, modernity is characterized by a gradual fragmentation of the different spheres of life from an original unity in a metaphysical-religious basis. The motor behind the process of differentiation is reason, which through its attempt to subjugate the whole field formerly held together by religion and metaphysics, multiplies itself into several incompatible forms. "[R]eason splits itself up into a plurality of value spheres and destroys its own universality' [...]. The different spheres do not only become independent, in so doing the values ruling them also change their quality and become mutually incompatible."<sup>37</sup> Bessler follows the similar idea that music – with the onset of concert reception and the cultivation of the aesthetic attitude – has went onto a path bringing it progressively further from a primordial unity, with the consequence that a once unified life-world has fragmented and allowed art to escape into an aesthetic sphere.

A probably more important source of influence is the German economist Karl Wilhelm Bücher's (1847-1930) *Arbeit und Rhythmus* (1896). The book is one of the few studies referred to

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>37</sup> Jukka Gronow 1988, "The Element of Irrationality: Max Weber's Diagnosis of Modern Culture", *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 31, No. 4, p. 320.

in “Grundfragen”, and it presents an interesting prefiguration of the fragmentation thesis on which Bessler bases his theory of utility music. The book is a groundbreaking study in the sociology of work, which to a large degree is based on a comprehensive collection and analysis of work-songs from around the world. Bücher summarizes his findings at the onset of the final chapter.

Unsere Untersuchung hat eine Reihe von Fäden blossgelegt, deren Enden in der heutigen Welt weit auseinanderliegen, deren Anfänge aber in dem Masse, als man sie weiter zurückverfolgt, einander sich nähern und schliesslich alle in einem Punkte zusammenlaufen. [...] An jenem Convergenzpunkte erblickten wir die Arbeit noch ungeschieden von Kunst und Spiel. Es giebt nur *eine* Art der menschlichen Thätigkeit, welche Arbeit, Spiel und Kunst in sich verschmilzt. In dieser ursprünglichen Einheit der geistig-körperlichen Thätigkeit des Menschen erkennen wir bereits die spätere wirthschaftlich-technische Arbeit und alle Künste, sowohl diejenigen der Bewegung als auch diejenigen der Ruhe, in ihren Keimpunkten eingeschlossen, und wenn wir unsere Begriffe auf diesen Zustand übertragen wollen, so müssen wir sagen: die Künste der Bewegung (Musik, Tanz, Dichtkunst) treten beim Vollzug der Arbeit mit zu Tage, und die Künste der Ruhe (Bildnerei, Malerei) erscheinen in den Ergebnissen der Arbeit [...].<sup>38</sup>

It is worth noting the distinction Bücher makes between music, dance and poetry, as art forms associated with motion and the process of work, and the visual arts, as connected with the stasis and rest following work. There are some interesting parallels with Spengler’s philosophy of culture. As we saw in the last chapter, Spengler asserted that young and vital cultures are distinguished by their abundance of vital potentiality, which in old and dead cultures/civilizations has been transformed to determinate actuality. If we read Bücher’s distinction between “processual” and “actual” arts into this Spenglerian framework, music, dance and poetry appear as expressions of vital culture, while the visual arts flourish where potentiality has been transformed into determinate actuality.

It seems to be a similar kind of idea that lurks behind Bessler’s critique of the classical concert. Seen from the vantage point of this Bücherian-Spenglerian synthesis, the crucial challenge

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38 Karl Bücher 1896, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, p. 100.

for music life is that music, through the influence of the forces expressed in the classical concert, has stopped being a vital art. Instead it has entered into the sphere of the “actual”, and has become what Besseler in a later text would call presentation music (*Darbietungsmusik*).<sup>39</sup> Although he does not refer to Spengler in “Grundfragen”, I will maintain that Besseler’s distinction between the concert and utility music seems to rest on an analogous life-philosophical basis.

## Community and society

Although Besseler resisted the label “music sociology”,<sup>40</sup> his work is clearly influenced by the 19<sup>th</sup> century tradition of social philosophy that would later form the theoretical basis for the early institutionalized sociology of the 1920s.<sup>41</sup> I have already suggested Bücher as an important source of influence on Besseler’s ideas. Another social theorist whose influence I want to emphasize in the following is Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) and his theory of community (*Gemeinschaft*). Unlike Bücher, Tönnies is not mentioned in “Grundfragen”, and his influence on Besseler is probably less direct than that of Bücher. However, living in Germany during the 1920s one would hardly had needed to read Tönnies to be familiar with his theory of community. In 1925, the year prior to the publication of “Grundfragen“, the German historian and sociologist Eugen Rosenstock defined sociology as “[die] Lehre von den gemeinschaftsbildenden und gemeinschaftszerstörenden Kräften.”<sup>42</sup> The programmatic use of the term did however reach far outside the confines of academic sociology. “Gemeinschaft“, Kurt Sontheimer writes, “war eines der magischen Worte der Weimarer Zeit.”<sup>43</sup>

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39 He defines *Darbietungsmusik* as music “die nur durch Berufsmusiker vorgeführt und von Zuhörern entgegengenommen wurde.“ Heinrich Besseler 1959, “Umgangsmusik und Darbietungsmusik im 16. Jahrhundert“, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 16, No. 1/2, p. 26.

40 Matthew Pritchard 2012, “Who Killed the Concert? ”, p. 38.

41 “There were no German chairs in sociology before World War I, and it was only about 1910 that Max Weber (1864-1920), often described as one of the founders of the discipline, began to call himself a sociologist.” Roger Smith 1997, *The Norton History of the Human Sciences*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, p. 531.

42 Eugen Rosenstock quoted in, Dorothea Kolland: *Die Jugendmusikbewegung: ‘Gemeinschaftsmusik’ – Theorie und Praxis*, J.B Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Stuttgart, 1979, p. 15.

43 Kurt Sontheimer quoted in, *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Besseler's use of the term is in large consistent with the meaning it had attained in the sociological discourse following Tönnies's hugely influential *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887). He uses the term throughout "Grundfragen", and the concern for the shaping of community (*Gemeinschaftsbildung*) is a persistent feature of his study. His critique of the concert centers on its failure to represent a true community. Instead it is built on a cosmopolitan idea of mankind, what he calls "das *Publikum* als unbegrenzte und ungegliederte Masse", standing as representative for the whole of mankind. The concert's failure to reach out of the educated middle class did not mean, Besseler maintains, that its social cohesion was strengthened. "Im Gegenteil hat sich die schon von Anfang an sehr dünnblütige Gemeinschaftsidee immer mehr verflüchtigt, bis schließlich eine völlig atomisierte, zusammenhangslose Masse, bestenfalls ein Abonnentenverein übrig blieb."<sup>44</sup> Besseler's description of the concert shares some interesting features with Tönnies's definition of "society" (*Gesellschaft*), which in the framework of Tönnies's social theory functions as counter-category to community.

Die Theorie der Gesellschaft konstruiert einen Kreis von Menschen, welche, wie in Gemeinschaft, auf friedliche Art neben einander leben und wohnen, aber nicht wesentlich verbunden, sondern wesentlich getrennt sind, und während dort verbunden bleibend trotz aller Trennungen, hier getrennt bleiben trotz aller Verbundenheiten.<sup>45</sup>

The concert subscription societies mentioned by Besseler are like the bonds holding Tönnies's separated mass of individuals together: social interaction is mediated through contracts in order to keep latent antagonisms at bay. Tönnies's description of the underlying tension in society calls the social contract theories of 17<sup>th</sup> century to mind. "[Hier] ist ein Jeder für sich allein, und im Zustande der Spannung gegen alle Uebrigen. [...] Keiner wird für den Anderen etwas thun und leisten, Keiner dem Anderen etwas gönnen und geben wollen, es sei denn um einer Gegenleistung oder Gegengabe willen, welche er *seinem* Gegebenen wenigstens *gleich* achtet."<sup>46</sup> Contracts (in modern society represented in the legal system) are seen as a means of resolving the challenges of

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44 Heinrich Besseler 1926, "Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens", p. 36.

45 Ferdinand Tönnies 1887, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft: Abhandlung des Communismus und des Socialismus als Empirische Culturformen*, Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland), Leipzig, p. 46.

46 Ibid., pp. 46-47.

interaction between opposing wills. However, this egoist state of tension is not, as in the English social contract theories of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, conceived as a natural state of man. While the social contract theorists described the state of nature as "characterized by certain deficiencies for which government was said to be the proper remedy",<sup>47</sup> the roles are reversed in Tönnies's narrative. The state of nature is on the contrary characterized by a complete unity of wills, which under the pressure of the social order of modernity has fragmented into egoism.

Die Theorie der Gemeinschaft geht solchen Bestimmungen gemäss von der vollkommenen Einheit menschlicher Willen als einem ursprünglichen oder natürlichen Zustande aus, welcher trotz der empirischen Trennung und durch dieselbe hindurch, sich erhalte, je nach der nothwendigen und gegebenen Beschaffenheit der Verhältnisse zwischen *verschieden bedingten* Individuen mannigfach gestaltet.<sup>48</sup>

Tönnies's emphasis on the unity of will resonates with Bessler's description of the colloquial listenership as "echte Gemeinschaft gleichgestimmte Einzelner". Bessler continues: "Eine derartige Kunst wird somit stets einem festen Bedarf entsprechen, sich ihr Publikum nicht suchen, sondern aus ihm herauswachsen."<sup>49</sup> Music should emerge from the community, rather than being imposed on it from above.

Otto von Gierke's (1841-1921) theory of fellowship (*Genossenschaft*), with its distinction between voluntary and imposed associations, was a decisive influence on Tönnies's conception of community.<sup>50</sup> Von Gierke would work out his ideas in a number of different publications that, like his major opus *Das Deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht* (4 vols. 1868-1913), would proceed from the study of the history of law. The Roman law tradition was given an adversary role in von Gierke's studies similar to – and with many of the same features of – *Gesellschaft* in Tönnies's social theory.

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47 Ronald D. Milo 2005, "State of nature", in Ted Honderich (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 894.

48 Ferdinand Tönnies 1887, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 9.

49 Heinrich Bessler 1926, "Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens", p. 38.

50 Tönnies's effort to fashion his theory of community on von Gierke's concept of fellowship is illustrated by the fact that he grants himself the liberty of altering the designations in his quoting of von Gierke, for instance when substituting von Gierke's "Genossenschaftliche Ordnung" with "Gemeinschaftliche Ordnung". Niall Bond 2001, "The Displacement of normative Discourse from Legal Theory to Empirical Sociology: Ferdinand Tönnies, Natural Law, The Historical School, Rudolf von Jhering and Otto von Gierke", *Forum Historia Iuris*, 23. September 2011, p. 26.



While Roman law had its origin in the cosmopolitan state, centered on the metropolis of Rome, the German law tradition emerged from the rural communities and the peasantry. Characteristic for medieval German law was, according to von Gierke, that it recognized groups as legal persona endowed with a group-personality (*Gesamtpersönlichkeit*), in opposition to Roman law which only recognized the individual human being. Von Gierke maintained that the medieval fellowships were not merely considered the sum of their individual members. A fellowship had the legal status of an individual in its own right, endowed with attributes of willing and acting on its own, in virtue of being a “Gesamtperson.”<sup>51</sup> Such compounded personalities come into being when individuals voluntarily form associations with a purpose motivated in their common will. Von Gierke contrasts this to “the imposed, artificial unity of groups formed despite or against their members’ will, as under feudal lordship and benevolent despotism.”<sup>52</sup> Fellowships were based on shared ownership in the means of production and a sharing of the labor. The lordships in contrast were based on the principle of an exclusive ownership of land, typically in the possession of a family, with laborers employed (or bound through serfdom) for its cultivation. In Tönnies’s social theory the elements that make up this distinction between Rome and the medieval Germany are fashioned into the sociological concepts of community and society. Furthermore, society, although Tönnies follows von Gierke in identifying it with Roman civilization, is also aligned with modernity and urbanism in general.

Expressions like the “complete unity of human wills” call to mind the Christian discourse on redemption. There are some traces of the romantic discourse on the ancients and the moderns in von Gierke’s theory of law. Roman (and thus with an ancient/heathen origin) law only recognized the individual human, which resonates with the romantic notion of the individuating tendency of the ancient soul. The medieval fellowships, based in the common will of their Christian members, could in contrast be conceived as a kind of Christian community of the heart.

In the entry on the term “Kirchengemeinschaft” in a Lutheran encyclopedia published in 1830, the community of Christians is contrasted with the friendships of the ancients in a fashion that bears some resemblance to the later legal and social theories of von Gierke and Tönnies.

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51 Ibid., p. 22.

52 Anthony Black 1990, “Editor’s introduction”, in Anthony Black (ed.), *Community in Historical Perspective: A translation of selections from Das deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht (The German Law of Fellowship) by Otto von Gierke, Translated by Mary Fischer*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. xv.

Was der Heiden Bücher rühmen von der Freundschaft eines Theseus, Orestes, Herkules, Pylades, und Solches ist gar Nichts gegen der Brüderschaft in der Kirche, welche zusammenhält und verknüpft die Gesellschaft und Gemeinschaft mit Gott, daß Christus, Gottes Sohn sagt, es geschehe ihm, was Einem aus seinen Allergeringsten geschieht.<sup>53</sup>

Like Tönnies's "Gemeinschaft", the fraternity of the church is constituted through emotional bonds, through what the anonymous author describes as "eine Versammlung der Herzen in einem Glauben."<sup>54</sup> While the Christian unity of will is constituted through faith and redemption, Tönnies defines the unity of will as the *natural* will, not a re-tuning from a natural state (of sin) to the will of God. One might interpret Tönnies's theory of community – and consequently also Bessler's notion of community, which as I have argued springs from the former – as founded on a secularized version of an older notion of the community of Christ.

## The Youth Movement

Although "Grundfragen" includes several references to the musical practices of the Youth Movement, Bessler is less inclined to engage with the theoretical writings of its leading figures. One text which he does mention in a footnote is the article "Musik und Gemeinschaft" by Hilmar Höckner, which I briefly mentioned earlier. Höckner was a scholar closely associated with the Youth Movement, and he would in 1927 be the first to write the history of its musical practice.<sup>55</sup>

The German Youth Movement refers to a loosely knit mass movement that flourished in the years from the turn of the century and into the next few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Peter Schröder describes it as "eine ideengeschichtlich und demographisch diffuse Erscheinung",<sup>56</sup> and it is difficult to delimit its ideology to a unified body of ideas. It has been described as everything from

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53 Friedrich Wilhelm Lomler, et al. (eds.) 1830, *Geist aus Luther's Schriften oder Concordanz der Ansichten und Urtheile des großen Reformators über die wichtigsten Gegenstände des Glaubens, der Wissenschaft und des Lebens: Dritter Band K bis R*, Druck und Verlag von Karl Wilhelm Leske, Darmstadt, p. 181.

54 Ibid.

55 Hilmar Höckner 1927, *Der Musik in der Deutschen Jugendbewegung, Entwicklungsgeschichtlich Dargestellt*, Georg Kallmeyer Verlag, Wolfenbüttel.

56 Peter Schröder 1996, *Die Leitbegriffe der deutschen Jugendbewegung in der Weimarer Republik: Eine ideengeschichtliche Studie*, Lit Verlag, Münster, p. 10.

proto-fascist to a radical countercultural movement prefiguring the youth movement of the 1960s. Its origin is often referred to the establishment of the Wandervogel (literally “the roaming bird”) movement in 1896. The activities promoted in the early stages of the Youth Movement were often motivated by the ideal of cultivating a closer connection with nature – both outer and inner nature – and promoting friendship across the divide of social classes. If most historians agree that the movement had its origin with the Wandervogels, there is less agreement on the question of its demise. Those who stick to a strict definition (i.e. restricted to the Wandervogels and related groups) argue that it ended with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, others will point to the National Socialists’ rise to power in 1933 – and the subsequent “nationalization” (or banning) of the free organizations. Others again will argue that the Youth Movement never really died, and that it to this day continues to exert its influence, from its position as an undercurrent in German culture throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Around the middle of the 1920s the movement had attained a tighter organizational structure under the designation “Bündisches Jugend”. Out of this emerged two separate musical fractions, on the one side the Musikantengilde with Fritz Jöde as a leading figure, and on the other side the “more nationalistic and folk-oriented” Finkensteiner Bund under the leadership of Walter Hensel. Both of these fractions, as Pamela M. Potter remarks, “eschewed anything they regarded as musical manifestations of bourgeois individualism, art for art’s sake, and the cult of genius.”<sup>57</sup> Instead the emphasis was on “direct participation regardless of levels of ability”, and Potter notes that “choral singing formed the core of its organized activities.”<sup>58</sup>

In 1923 Fritz Jöde published a compilation of texts based on various lectures delivered in 1921 and 1922 under the title *Unser Musikleben*. Jöde is especially concerned with what he identifies as a steadily growing distance between music and life. It manifests itself as a fissure between music and its audience that made its first appearance in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly, Jöde connects this issue to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century debates on church music, which were presented in the third chapter of this thesis. The decisive step towards severing the bonds between people and music occurred, Jöde maintains, when the ties between Christian worship and music were loosened. “Bei der Musik ist es die Loslösung ihres Inhalts aus dem Gottesdienst im Sinne einer Verselbständigung und ihr Weg durch Niederung der Kunst hindurch bis zu der ungeheuren Stelle

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57 Pamela M. Potter 1998, *Most German of the Arts*, p. 7.

58 Ibid., p. 8.

hin, wo ihr Wille, in ihrer Besonderheit selbst Gottesdienst zu sein, in Beethoven an den Tag kam.“<sup>59</sup> Großgebauer’s and his followers’ accusations against musicians for showing off their art rather than serving God, resounds in Jöde’s narration of the fall of musical life. So does the opposition between engaging the congregation actively and reducing them to passive listeners. The theological dimension is, however, absent from Jöde’s argument. The congregation, which in the earlier Christian discourse had been seen as a means towards an end (the glorification of God) is now, in its new guise as community, presented as an end in itself.<sup>60</sup>

## Bessler’s history of listening

The concluding part of “Grundfragen” presents a rather rudimentary history of European listening. Bessler begins by stating that he will briefly examine the new perspectives on history gained through the concepts obtained in the preceding investigations. The basic insight to be gained through this new music historical approach is "daß auch die führende Kunstmusik sehr häufig rein umgangsmäßig bestimmt ist, und daß im ganzen genommen das umgangsmäßige Musizieren viel weitere Gebiete und Zeiträume beherrscht als die nur vereinzelt auftretende eigenständige ausgeformte Musik.“<sup>61</sup> Through the identification of certain stylistic traits, interpreted as the imprint of a specific mode of listening, Bessler sets out to demonstrate that colloquial modes of listening once reached out far beyond the confines of what now belongs within the domain of utility music. In the following I will focus on Bessler’s account of the development of the French motet during the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

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59 Fritz Jöde 1925, *Unser Musikleben*, p. 16.

60 The Youth Movement might also have been under the influence of the Liturgical Reform Movement in Weimar Germany, which as Bernard E. Meland notes, advocated a shift “from the cultivation of personal piety among individuals to the group worship of the total Christian community.” Meland, writing in 1931, explicitly links the ethos of the Reform Movement with those of the contemporaneous Youth Movement. Bernard E. Meland, 1931, “The Modern Liturgical Movement in Germany”, *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 519.

61 Heinrich Bessler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, p. 48.

When emerging into history, artistic music, here represented by the early French motet from around the year 1200 (the Notre Dame school of polyphony), displays certain traits that Besseler takes as pointing to a colloquial basis.

Zunächst fehlt ihr das Klangliche so gut wie ganz. Wer von außen zuhört, findet nirgends einen klanglichen Ruhepunkt. Ohne Kontraste läuft der Rhythmus gleichförmig durch. Eine formale Gliederung ist aus der ununterbrochenen Folge ziemlich kurzer, sich gegenseitig überschneidender Perioden kaum herauszuhören.<sup>62</sup>

The lack of a clearly defined tonal/harmonic center of reference makes it hard to establish the outside perspective required for autonomous listening. The use of modal rhythm, with its continuous flow of short cyclically repeated and overlapping rhythmic patterns, reveals the immersive qualities of the music. When “viewed” from the outside, the early motet does nothing to challenge the anticipations of the aesthetically attuned listener. This contrast between outside and inside positions recalls the earlier presented comparison of the dancer and the onlooker. Like the dancer, the listener of the Notre Dame repertoire is expected to “join in” rather than “look at” from the outside. The listener, Besseler maintains, should join into the music by singing-along (with the voice or in the mind) to a chosen part in the polyphonic fabric.

Ganz anders nimmt sich das Werk jedoch aus, wenn man es umgangsmäßig auffaßt, d. h. von einer Stimme aus mitvollzieht. Hier stören sich die Periodenüberschneidungen nicht mehr, die Klangordnung gewinnt als Abstandsregelung der Stimmen einen neuen Sinn, die Gleichförmigkeit der Rhythmik ermöglicht es, die Bewegung ohne weiteres aufzugreifen und mitzumachen. In diesem undifferenzierten, durch keine Überraschung gestörten Verlauf liegt das Wesentliche der typisch umgangsmäßigen modalen Rhythmik.<sup>63</sup>

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62 Ibid., p. 49.

63 Ibid.

According to Bessler, the Notre Dame listener accesses the music in ways similar to those characterizing the established forms of colloquial listening associated with utility music. First of all, the early French motet compares to dance music and work songs in its use of modal rhythm for the purpose of facilitating a rhythmic coordination of the congregation. Predictability and stability in the rhythm discourage the listener from perceiving the music as a segmented structure. The immersive features of the music come to the fore. The music appears as a sonorous environment more inviting to the body than to the eagerly anticipating and observant mind. Furthermore, through its confessional use of language, the early French motet also belongs to the word-attached forms of utility music, like the national anthems or political songs which Bessler referred to earlier in the article. The singers sing themselves into the community of the rite.

Bessler argues that the colloquial features of the French motet weaken as the 13<sup>th</sup> century progresses. He identifies a change from a primarily colloquial towards an autonomous form of listening with reference to certain new traits in the music of the subsequent generation (after the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century).

Die modale Rhythmik ist gesprengt, unregelmäßige und rhythmisch willkürliche Gesamtabschnitte reihen sich aneinander, das solistische Gewicht der Oberstimme sowie die regelmäßigen Quint-Oktavklänge weisen eindeutig auf den außenstehenden Zuhörer, dem die drei Stimmen jetzt einheitlich zusammengefaßt gegenübertreten. [...M]an erfährt die Musik als etwas Gegenständliches. Zwischen ihr und dem Hörer ist die bisherige unmittelbare Verbindung gefallen und ein Abstand eingetreten, der es verbietet, sie ohne weiteres mit der eigenen inneren Aktivität zu überschwemmen. Man muß 'stillhalten', um ihre unregelmäßige neue Gliederung zu erfassen. Sie tritt dem Hörer als etwas Eigenwilliges entgegen, das er nicht mehr sogleich mitvollziehen, sonder zunächst nur *nachvollziehen* kann. Bisher wurde das Werk unmittelbar von der Lebendigkeit des Musikers und seines resonanzgebenden Hörerkreise getragen. Aus dieser Einbettung in den Lebenszusammenhang erhebt es sich jetzt zu einem *eigenständigen* Dasein.<sup>64</sup>

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64 Ibid., pp. 49-50.

The autonomous listener makes his presence known through the appearance of certain musical features specifically designed to draw attention to themselves, to make them stand out from the general sonic environment. Through rhythmic and melodic definition and segmentation, the motet now presents itself before the listener as an autonomous object requiring a special form of attention. From this point on, Western music started its drift away from its original source in the life world, to fashion for itself a place in the ideal realm, later to be investigated by the science of aesthetics from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on.

Von hier aus beginnt sich die künstlerische Sphäre als eine eigene Welt mit eigener Gesetzlichkeit über dem alltäglichen Dasein aufzuschichten. Das eigenständige Hören, das sich auf die erwähnte ästhetische Gegenständlichkeit der Musik richtet, steht nicht mehr in einem Zweckzusammenhang wie das alltägliche Zuhören, ist auch nicht mehr von konkreten Bedürfnissen getragen wie das umgangsmäßige Vollziehen. Ihm liegt nur die allgemeine Erwartung eines ‘ästhetischen Genießens’ zugrunde.<sup>65</sup>

These developments in musical culture facilitate the emergence of the musical connoisseur (*Kenner*). The connoisseur stands as an equal beside the composer. Together they form a closely knit community of experts. At this stage in the history of listening, which Bessler designates the “pre-classical”, musical culture is still dominated by the virtues of craftsmanship, but the “Riß zwischen Musik und Volk”, to borrow an expression from Fritz Jöde,<sup>66</sup> had already emerged. Those who did not possess an understanding of the principles and techniques of the craft were kept away from actively partaking in musical life. This pre-classical form of listening enjoyed its greatest flourishing during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, contemporaneous with the career of C. F. E. Bach, whose music more than any other displays the stylistic traits associated with pre-classical autonomous listening.<sup>67</sup> This listening connoisseur has some obvious similarities with the ideal of the listening judge upheld by Wotton and the music historians of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is natural to assume that Bessler derives this listener from its manifestations in 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics.

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65 Heinrich Bessler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, p. 50.

66 Fritz Jöde 1925, *Unser Musikleben*, p. 21.

67 Heinrich Bessler 1926, “Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens”, p. 50.

Bessler's historiography of medieval listening is based on the fragmentation thesis introduced by Karl Bücher in *Arbeit und Rhythmus*. It is based on the acknowledgement, as Bücher writes, "dass Arbeit, Musik und Dichtung auf der primitiven Stufe ihrer Entwicklung in eins verschmolzen gewesen sein [...]."<sup>68</sup> The unity of work, music and poetry points back to a primordial unified sphere of existence, representing "ein ursprünglicheres Leben" as Bessler calls it.<sup>69</sup> "Arbeit und Erholung sind noch nicht gegensätzlich auseinandergefallen, sondern gleichmäßig um die Lebensmitte gelagert und vom gleichen Kräftestrom gespeist."<sup>70</sup>

Bessler's history of listening is structured over the narrative of decay. It is the story of how Western music set out on a journey bringing it progressively further away from its life-giving origin in the soil of everyday existence. It thus shares the historiographical outlook of the Youth Movement. "Ihre Konzeption von Musikgeschichte", Dorothea Kolland writes about the latter, "ist insgesamt die einer Verfallsgeschichte, des Verfalls der Gemeinschaftsmusikkultur. Die Symptome des Verfalls werden gesehen im Verlust der 'Verbindung zwischen Musik und Leben', die sich in der 'Individualisierung des Musiklebens' niederschlägt."<sup>71</sup> Although Bessler presents the history of listening as a history of decay, he, like the Youth Movement, nurtures the hope that the tide of increasing fragmentation and individualization could be reversed. On the first page of "Grundfragen" Bessler lists up a number of recent developments in musical life – among which are the popularity of jazz music, the musical practices of the Youth Movement and the increasing cultivation of early (pre-classical) forms of music – which he takes as an indication that the earlier truisms of the classic/romantic paradigm are no longer taken for granted.<sup>72</sup>

In a paper published the same year as "Grundfragen", under the title "Erläuterungen zu einer Vorführung ausgewählter Denkmäler der Musik des Späten Mittelalters",<sup>73</sup> Bessler presents a counter-narrative to "Grundfragen"'s historical fatalism. He now identifies a turn from the autonomous towards the colloquial in the musical life of the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century. The two protagonists

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68 Karl Bücher 1896, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, p. 78.

69 Heinrich Bessler 1926, "Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens", p. 46.

70 Ibid., p. 39.

71 Dorothea Kolland, 1979, *Die Jugendmusikbewegung*, p. 200.

72 Heinrich Bessler 1926, "Grundfragen des Musikalischen Hörens", p. 35.

73 Heinrich Bessler 1973, "Erläuterungen zu einer Vorführung Ausgewählter Denkmäler der Musik des Späten Mittelalters", in Wilibald Gurlitt (ed.), *Bericht Über die Freiburger Tagung für Deutsche Orgelkunst vom 27. bis 30. Juli 1926*, Bärenreiter, Kassel, pp. 141-154.



in Besseler's story are Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1410/1425-1497) and the most prominent representative of the preceding generation of composers, Guillaume Dufay (c. 1400-1474). The method of investigation is similar to the one in "Grundfragen" in that Besseler seeks to identify traits in the music that could be interpreted as the imprint of a certain mode of listening.

He starts by remarking the (real or imagined) reaction of the modern listener to the exposure to the music of the two composers. The music of Ockeghem, Besseler asserts, will initially seem more accessible than that of Dufay, the latter being characterized by a "medieval" mix of heterogeneous lines of a variously vocal and instrumental character. The initial familiarity of Ockeghem's music is explained by the composer's status as originator (*Stammvater*) of the Flemish-Netherland school of composers. Ockeghem is thus the predecessor of the more familiar Palestrina, with whose music the modern listener is more conversant. The sound image (*Klangbild*) of Ockeghem's music reminds the modern listener of that of the late renaissance. However, when the initial unfamiliarity of Dufay's music is overcome, the modern listener, Besseler asserts, will find his music more accessible than that of Ockeghem, whose apparent accessibility is restricted to the surface.

Sieht man aber näher zu, so erweist sich diese scheinbar leichte Eingänglichkeit als eine Täuschung. Die Dinge liegen gerade umgekehrt: Dufays Musik bietet sich dem Hörer, wenn er nur die erste klangliche Fremdheit überwunden hat, als ohne weiteres überschaubar. Hier ist alles wohlgegliedert, der Aufbau des Ganzen von höchster Klarheit, die Melodik aus übersichtlichen Gruppen zusammengefügt und klanglich wie bewegungsmäßig von den Begleitstimmen abgehoben.<sup>74</sup>

The reason why the modern listener will experience the music of Dufay as more accessible is explained by this music's basis in an autonomous mode of listening, familiar to the modern listener of classical music. It announces itself as a presentational art to be "gazed" upon from the outside. Conversely, the listener would be left unsatisfied if approaching the music of Ockeghem with the expectation of being faced with a presentational object discernible through the application of the aesthetic attitude.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

In Ockeghems Musik herrscht dagegen einheitlicher Chorklang, der Gegensatz von Untergrund und farbig differenzierten solistischen Linien fehlt. Die Stimmen sind kaum gegeneinander abgehoben und für den Zuhörer in sich nur wenig gegliedert, auch überschneiden sich die Abschnitte so stark, daß nur selten einmal eine klangliche Gesamtzäsur entsteht. Es ist ein unüberschaubarer Strom von Musik, ein wirres Linienspiel mit kaleidoskopartig wechselnden Klangbildern, eine atemraubende Fülle für den Zuhörer. Offenbar muß man zu solchen Werken einen anderen Zugang suchen.<sup>75</sup>

In Ockeghem's music the listener finds himself thrown into a maelstrom of juxtaposed melodies and harmonies, not giving him a chance of enjoying it through the bird's eye view of the aesthetic attitude. Ockeghem's music is similar to the Notre Dame repertoire in that it requires an alteration of perspective from an outside onlooker to a participating insider.

Eine wesentliche andere Art des Hörens ergibt sich nur durch einen vollständigen Wechsel des Standpunktes im buchstäblichen Sinne. Statt den Ockeghemischen Satz von außen als Zuhörer aufzufassen, versuchte man vielmehr, sich in ihn hineinzustellen, eine der Stimmen – welche ist gleichgültig, da alle gleichberechtigt sind – innerlich oder tatsächlich mitzusingen. Sogleich nimmt die Musik ein anderes Aussehen an: erst von der wirklich durchlebten Einzelstimme aus kann man zu ihrem Wesen und ihrer Gesinnung vordringen.<sup>76</sup>

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75 Ibid.

76 Ibid., p. 151.

## Summary

In this chapter I have argued that Bessler's distinction between autonomous and colloquial listening is structured on a dualism developed within 19<sup>th</sup> century social theory and given its most influential expression in Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887). There is a strong normative base to this dualism. Bessler evaluates the different forms of music making and reception on the basis of their ability to promote the qualities inherent in the notion of community (*Gemeinschaft*). Music is defined as detrimental to community when it, like in the classical concert, discriminates between its participants, dividing them on a basis of a strict differentiation of task, separating composer, musicians and audience – the last group even alienated from their fellow listeners in the solipsism of the aesthetic attitude. Music can on the other hand assist the shaping of community and strengthen preexisting communities when it is shared among an actively participating assembly of people present together in sonic space.

There seems to be a vitalist/life-philosophical basis for Bessler's philosophy of music. This thread has not been pursued at any length here, apart from pointing out parallels with Bücher and Spengler. Bessler seems to associate the disintegration of the unified sphere of existence with a draining of vitality, leading towards spiritual lethargy and enervation. The ideal of "primitivism", as pre-differentiated unity, also points in this direction.

I have furthermore indicated that there might be traces of the romantic ancient-modern discourse in Bessler's distinction between autonomous and colloquial listening. The discourse seems to have been mediated through von Gierke's comparative analysis of Roman law and the legal codes of medieval Germany, and the subsequent generalization and reformulation of this dualism in the social philosophy of Tönnies. The link between Tönnies's idea of *Gemeinschaft* and traditional notions of the Christian congregation (*Gemeinde*) seems to have been reinforced through the influence of liturgical reform movements on Weimar aesthetics in general and the Youth Movement in particular.

Bessler's description of the autonomous listening of the concert hall has also something in common with the romantic's account of the objectifying and plastic orientation of the mind of the ancient heathens. There is also an interesting parallel between Bessler's discussion of the concert and utility music and the theological debates on artistic music and congregational singing that raged in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. There is a sense in which Bessler reconnects with the Lutheran ideal of

universal participation. The religious context is however absent, and notions like “community” and “life” have replaced those of “God” and “religious edification”. Bessler’s connection with the liturgical discourse seems, similar to the traces of the ancient-modern distinction, to be indirect and primarily mediated through 19<sup>th</sup> century social theory.



## Summary and conclusion

My aim has been to examine the role of the listener in music historiography, represented by a select set of texts published between 1776 and 1928. The listener, as a discursive object, has been interpreted as an answer to specific problems emerging from the immediate historical context of the text in which it appears. It has been my aim throughout the different chapters to identify the arguments behind statements, and the debates within which the arguments belong. “The listener” – in the various shapes and guises in which he appears in my selected sources – is not by necessity engaged in the type of behavior that one would usually associate with the term “listening”. Listening is defined as a kind of activity, the listener is the recipient of the music who might or might not be involved in the activity of listening. There are a number of different questions that converge on the figure of the listener. In addition to listening, the listener provides the focal point of ideas of musical effect, taste, judgment etc.

Characteristic for the music historiography of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century – represented by the histories of Hawkins, Burney and Forkel – is that notions of listening, taste and judgment are used for the purpose of unknotting the immediate relation between music and the effect it enforces on the audience. The relation between music and effect is supplemented with a mediating factor, typically in the form of a judgment preceded by a keen observation of the progression of sounds in order to collect the premises for the judgment. I have traced this strategy back to William Wotton’s defense of modern music against the objections raised by Sir William Temple. Earlier commentators have pointed to the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns as an important backdrop for 18<sup>th</sup> century music historiography. The original contribution delivered in the first chapter of this thesis lies in the identification of the listener as an important field on which this battle for modern music was fought.

Hawkins, Burney and Forkel integrate the ability to listen and judge into an historical-evolutionary explanatory framework. There are different ways in which this historicization of

listening could be accomplished. I have identified two main strategies. One rests on a cumulative notion of evolution, where the listener's ability to judge correctly in matters of musical perfection is seen as conditioned by the state of knowledge of the age. Knowledge is understood as an accumulation of data derived from experience. A greater reservoir of accumulated experiences, either understood as the single listener's experience with music or the experience of generations embodied in the science of music (music theory), is seen as an asset in the task of judging correctly. Wotton and Hawkins share this cumulative notion of evolution in listening and judgment. The alternative tendency is to interpret the abilities of the soul – on which listening and musical judgment are based – into an evolutionary framework. According to this line of thinking, elementary abilities, like introspection and the mental organization of sensation, are viewed as conditioned on the developmental state of the soul. This last strategy is characteristic of Forkel's approach. Burney combines elements from both of the above approaches.

The second chapter started with outlining the main structures of the romantic ancient-modern discourse. It then continued with investigating the repudiation, but also appropriation, of the romantic view on ancient music in the first volume of Ambros's *Geschichte der Musik* (1862). Ambros rejects the romantics' insistence on a modern (Christian) origin of ("our current") music, instead giving the priority to the ancient Greeks. This is achieved by attributing the Greeks with the invention of listening – defined as the keen observation of a musical object in preparation for the musical judgment. What Ambros in fact seems to be doing is to relocate the figure of the musical expert, theoretically formulated in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> century, back into antiquity. Ambros's musical judge shares the general outline of the 18th century expert listener, or *Kenner*, as Johann Georg Sulzer defines him: "[E]r vergleicht das Werk, so wie es ist, mit dem, was es seiner Natur nach seyn sollte, um zu bestimmen, wie nahe es der Vollkommenheit liegt [...]."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to being fashioned over the mold of the 18<sup>th</sup> century expert listener, Ambros's Greek listener retains the main traits attributed to the ancient soul in the romantic discourse. According to the romantic writers on music, music could not blossom in the soil of the ancient soul. The reason was that it lacked the depth dimension opened up by the Christian religion, which the romantics regarded as the precondition for modern music (as a romantic art). Ambros turns this deficiency of the ancient Greek soul into an asset. He fashions the allegedly surface-oriented,

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1 Johann George Sulzer 1774, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste in einzeln, nach alphabetischer Ordnung der Kunstwörter auf einander folgenden, Artikeln abgehandelt, Zweyter Theil, von K bis Z*, pp. 572.

individuating, plastic orientation of the Greek soul into the fundamental basis on which modern music could develop. The contemplative-observing attitude of listening, where music is given the opportunity to present itself as an object for aesthetic contemplation rather than merely a progression of sensual stimuli, requires a technique for avoiding dangers of sensual immersion and reverie. The plastic orientation of the Greek mind provided the ancient Greeks with an ideal base from which such techniques could be developed. Ambros repeatedly contrasts the Greeks with the Orientals in order to illustrate the merits of the Greek mode of listening and the dangers associated with its negation.

The battle scene on which the third chapter unfolds is what I, following Joseph Herl, have labeled the “worship wars” in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Lutheran church. The introduction to the second volume of Forkel’s *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* was interpreted as a response to the challenge from those Forkel in an earlier text had designated “Feinden der Kirchenmusik und Kirchenmusiker”, i.e. the supporters of congregational singing over the use of artistic music in church. Although Forkel did not openly address these enemies in the introduction, their presence could nonetheless be inferred from Forkel’s arguments. The discursive framework within which the “worship wars” were fought, forces Forkel to address a particular set of issues in order to give legitimacy to artistic music. The use of music within the Christian worship had to be legitimized with reference to its ability to glorify God or in assisting the edification of the congregation.

The singing layman of the congregation, as a discursive object, was tailored to meet a set of demands emanating the Lutheran ideals of worship. Most important for the present context was the ideal of personal engagement with God and the holy word. This ideal – which was a trademark both of orthodox Lutheranism as well as the pietist movement emerging in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century – was advanced in explicit contrast to the supposed mediated engagement cultivated in Catholicism. The mentioned “enemies of church music and church musicians” would often point to the parallels between artistic music and the worship within the Catholic Church. In both instances the congregation was reduced to mere onlookers and listeners, being denied a participating role in the worship. Everything had to pass through the mediating instance of the clergy (aka musician). The service was furthermore held in a language which the congregation did not understand, in the one instance the recited Latin, in the other the obscuring of the texts through artistic singing and the sound of instruments.



Forkel, being a Lutheran and writing with the purpose of defending the use of artistic music in the Lutheran church, could not ignore these objections as they pointed directly to a core value of Lutheran theology. I have argued that Forkel defended the use of artistic music in the Christian worship by merging the established ideal of the Lutheran theology of music with an acoustical conception of music and the human body. The listener, as Forkel portrays him in the 1801 publication, does not listen, or at least not by necessity. He is brought on the scene to provide a contrast to the singing layman of the congregation, and for the purpose of illustrating how the passive, non-participating assembly could be divinely attuned through music's natural ability to influence morality and improve on the will of the listener. Music is redefined as an art of transforming acoustical space through the manipulation of the motions in air. The listener appears as an elastic object immersed in air, ready to be tuned to the incoming vibrations of air.

The interpretative contexts for the final two chapters are somewhat more diverse. Schering's "Klangstile" and Bessler's "Grundfragen" are, on the most general level, motivated in a discourse on cultural crisis. Oswald Spengler and Ferdinand Tönnies, who were presented in the fourth and fifth chapter, are merely two representatives of this more general discourse on cultural crisis. It found expression in the writings of a number of philosophers as well as fictional authors and artists throughout the period from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Although the crisis was conceptualized in various ways, there seems to have been a general pattern of oppositions structuring the different manifestations of the crisis discourse. Three core notions for conceptualizing the crisis were enervation (as opposed to life/vitality), fragmentation (as opposed to the primitive/united) and rationality (as opposed to the immediacy of emotions). The crisis discourse was accompanied by a discourse of hope, where trust was transferred to the qualities negated by Western culture: life, vitality, the primitive, the immediate, etc. The remedy is thus contained within the chain of opposites structuring the crisis discourse, and is to be attained through a transvaluation of inherited hierarchies. This transvaluation, which was most forcefully and influentially expressed in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, was typically conceived in terms of a reinvigoration, involving a return to the life-giving sources of culture.

In Weimar-era musicology, the discourse on cultural revitalization takes the form of a reassessment of value systems adhering to the music as well as the musical institutions and forms of reception inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the process, several of the oppositions which had provided the discursive environment for the listener in 19<sup>th</sup> century music historiography resurfaced.

The romantic discourse on the ancients and the moderns, admittedly in a form divorced from the two ages and religions, could be glimpsed behind the narrative structures of Schering's "Musikhören" and Bessler's "Grundfragen". Other oppositions reappear in transvalued forms, like the oppositions of listening and immediate effect, participation as opposed to mere listening and the ancient Greeks as opposed to the Orientals.

The listening-effect distinction, as it was formulated during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was based on the distinction between mediation and immediacy. In Bessler's "Grundfragen" the contents of this mediation, like attentive observation and musical judgment, are denigrated to the sphere of the aesthetical, which is linked with enervation and fragmentation. In Schering's "Klangstile" we find a similar association of sound-fusion – as the paradigmatic sound style of the classical-romantic musical era – with notions which I have interpreted in the direction of a life-denying escapism. Against the life-denying forces residing in the musical inheritance from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the two authors point towards alternative forms of reception – associated with utility music and the cleaved sound style – which seem to impose a more immediate effect on the listener, manifested in qualities like communal unity, primitivism and vitality.

The participation-listening distinction is given a seminal status in Bessler's "Grundfragen". During the controversies of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, the case for congregational singing had been made with reference to the religious and moral benefits of letting the congregation partake in the divine worship through song. Luther had also emphasized that singing participation should be seen as a sign of true belief, and therefore also a test thereof. "Wer aber nich davon singen und sagen wil, das ist ein zeichen, das ers nicht gleubet und nicht ins new fröliche Testament, Sondern unter das alte, faule, unlustige Testament gehöret."<sup>2</sup> I have suggested that Bessler's distinction between the onlooker and participating insider should be understood in relation to the ideas on collectivity and subjectivity expressed in Tönnies distinction between *Gemenischaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Utility music, as Bessler defines it, invites the listener to participate. The listener accepts this invitation by joining-in and, in so doing, at the same time accepts to become part of the musically delineated community.

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2 Luther quoted in, Robin A. Leaver 2009, "Luther on Music", p. 277 n16.

As mentioned in the introduction, Rob C. Wegman's article "'Das Musikalische Hören' in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Perspectives from Pre-War Germany" (1998) provided a background for my thesis. Wegman read Bessler and Schering in relation to the budding field of historiography of music listening in the 1990s. He ultimately concluded that the scholarly endeavor represented by Schering's and Bessler's interwar writings on the history of listening "never developed into the sort of vigorous scholarly tradition on which one might confidently build today."<sup>3</sup> My aim has been to invert the perspective position from which Wegman read this literature. It has been my purpose to interpret this literature, not as the humble beginnings of a future historiography of listening, but rather as the culmination of earlier modes of approaching issues pertaining to the listener.

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<sup>3</sup> Rob C. Wegman 1998, "'Das Musikalische Hören' in the Middle Ages and Renaissance", p. 436.

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